

Top 100 in 150

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The new middle-class dissenters **The Nazis stole it – From students to stars**
where is it now? via Edinburgh?

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3,053

40P (BR 45P)

THE INDEPENDENT

THURSDAY 1 AUGUST 1996

WEATHER Mainly dry and bright with sunny spells

Listen to me

I wonder if you are all living in another world in Westminster, a safe cocoon where the real world no longer touches you.

So, today I'm going to ask you to try and imagine what you would feel if a gunman burst into the House of Commons and shot dead the Prime Minister and 16 MPs. Maybe your reply would be that nothing like that can ever happen to you. I thought that too. I thought these things happened somewhere else, to someone else.

But if what happened in Dunblane Primary School had happened in the House of Commons, would you all still be dragging your heels and trying to appease the gun lobby? I very much doubt it.

On 13 March I lost my daughter Joanna. She was nearly six years old. Alison, the baby sister she had known for only four-and-a-half months, in a few years time will have to start school. On that day, when Alison takes her seat in the Primary One classroom, I want all of you to come up

An open letter from a Dunblane mother to six Tory MPs who ruled out a handgun ban as 'impractical'

here to Dunblane and explain to her the decision you have just taken.

Will you be able to guarantee her safety? Will you be able to tell her that another Dunblane could never happen again? Because if there is no ban on guns, you will be able to offer Alison nothing.

I've listened to some of your attempts to justify this decision: "It's not the guns that are to blame, it's people." But I sat through the days of the Cullen inquiry and what came out was that there is no way you can decide on the suitability of someone to own guns. You can never foresee every circumstance they will find themselves in.

However, one clear fact is there to see – if guns were not legally available, such crimes could not be committed.

Alison will never know Joanna.

You say people who shoot for sport would be disadvantaged if guns were banned. But do you value life less than sport? It worries me that you are accepting influence from the wrong places.

The police, who uphold and enforce the law, agree that guns should be banned. Yet, all of you seem to be ignoring this advice and instead accept the views of some fellow MPs and the influence of the gun lobby.

Why? Surely there comes a point when we all have to admit our society is no longer safe, and that to make it safer we should take guns away.

Listen to me. I and the other Dunblane families are not the first people on earth to lose their children through violent death. But our children were murdered. And all of you appear to be turning a deaf ear to everything that we are saying.

Pamela Ross

MPs defend 'balanced view' on gun controls

JOHN RENTOUl
Political Correspondent

Some Tory MPs on the Home Affairs Committee and gun club members reacted yesterday to the future which greeted news of their decision not to recommend a ban on handguns, but others were unavailable for comment.

John Greenway, MP for Ryedale, spoke to BBC radio's 'Today' programme on his car phone on his way out of the country. "We have concluded that a ban on handguns would be impractical," he said.

"We took the view that it is not legally held firearms that cause the problem in this country. It is the way that firearms certificates are issued where the law needs to be strengthened.

"While we entirely understand why people might want to ban handguns in the light of Dunblane, you have got to sit down and look dispassionately at what that would mean, what the effect would be and would it, in all honesty, prevent that kind of incident happening

again in the future. "We came to the balanced view that it is not."

Sir Ivan Lawrence, the committee chairman, was in Hong Kong, and issued a short statement through his Commons office saying: "Nobody has seen the report yet, since it has not been published. There is therefore nothing to be said until publication on 13 August."

Warren Hawkesley, MP for Halesowen and Stourbridge, told Talk Radio: "I personally do not believe there is evidence yet to satisfy me to get rid of handguns entirely."

Mr Hawkesley, whose hobby is shooting, said security should be aimed at keeping guns out of the wrong hands rather than banning their sale completely.

"You can't legislate for a madman if someone is determined they want to go about using a gun," he said.

Nearly all guns used in crime are illegal anyway."

There was no answer on any of Dame Jill Knight's numbers: her London flat, her home in her Birmingham Edg-

baston constituency, her Commons office and her secretary's home number.

Walter Sweeney, defending a majority of 19 – the smallest of the six – in his Vale of Glamorgan seat, was on holiday and "uncontactable" according to his constituency office.

David Ashby, recently deselected as the Tory candidate for his Leicestershire North-West constituency for the next election after an unsuccessful libel action, did not return messages.

Most numbers for the MPs' constituency association offices were engaged, after being put in the Sun.

The National Pistol Association said the select committee had come to "a sensible decision". Ian McConchie, its general secretary, said: "We're very happy with what is a sensible decision. The sport is participated in by a million people from a wide range of different backgrounds. They are normal members of society. There are bank managers and road-sweepers and people who work

for local authorities – it's a real cross-section of society."

He denied that a ban on hand-guns could have prevented the Dunblane massacre.

"We understand there have been two massacres during the last 10 years and we have deepest sympathies for those involved but a ban on guns would not have prevented them happening," Mr McConchie said.

"It could have happened using any type of weapon."

The British Association for Shooting and Conservation welcomed the select committee's suggestions.

Dr Colin Sheddell, its Scotland region director, said: "The committee took evidence from a wide variety of sources, including very senior police officers."

"They stated it would be impractical to introduce a ban on hand guns."

But the association would welcome the recommendation for closer checks on people applying for firearms licences.

Guns row page 2

Bryan Appleyard, page 17



Stuff of life: Scientists handle frozen embryos in the laboratory. Each stick like this carries one, three-celled embryo.

Today:
the end
for 3,000
frozen
embryos

GLENDA COOPER

Thousands of embryos are to be destroyed today after a last-ditch appeal to the Prime Minister failed to gain a six-month reprieve. This morning clinics will begin thawing the 3,000 embryos. Fertility experts called it an "appalling waste" and at a London press conference couples desperate for a child pleaded to be able to "adopt" the embryos.

The Human Fertility and Embryo Authority (HFEA) said that legally embryos must be destroyed after five years unless both parents consented to further storage. A spokeswoman said it would be "legally and ethically wrong" for couples to adopt an embryo without parents' permission.

As the deadline approached, scores of clinics were handling calls from couples who had been untraceable or had not replied to letters. At Bourn Hall, where the first test-tube baby, Louise Brown, was created, the medical director, Peter Brinsden, said 800 embryos would still have to be destroyed. "None of us wants to destroy a single embryo. It's the first time we've destroyed an embryo without the express permission of the couple," said Mr Brinsden, who once threatened to go to prison rather than destroy the embryos.

Peter Bromwich, medical director of Midland Fertility Services, where 90 embryos will be destroyed, said: "It has been very badly planned by the civil service. We have been telling them for years that this would happen... I... would not want the embryos destroyed but we have to abide by the law."

The Life Campaigns pro-life group delivered a letter to Downing Street and the Department of Health demanding a six-month moratorium on destroying the embryos. Spokesman John Scarsbrick said 130 couples from around the world had come forward to "adopt" embryos. Three couples appeared at a London press conference, including Norman and Catherine Walker from Hitchin, Herts. Mr Walker, 39, who called the HFEA's actions "disgusting", said they had tried for four years for a child and his wife had had a miscarriage. "We would love a child but we are also trying to save a life."

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Beautiful or repulsive, foul or fair? – find out on page 3



He wrote Olympic history
with two golds. Each one
a thriller in 10 chapters.

DALIEY
THOMPSON



OLYMPIC LEGENDS BY SWATCH.

Swatch

QUICKLY
Moynihan for Lords
Colin Moynihan could return to Parliament as a peer, after a High Court ruling that his half-brother, the late Third Baron Moynihan of Leeds, forged divorce documents relating to his fourth marriage. Page 3

Botham stumped
Ian Botham said he was "astonished" to have lost his libel case against Imran Khan, estimated to have cost more than £500,000. Page 5



news

Blair runs ahead of Major in Olympics

JOHN RENTOUX
Political Correspondent

Tony Blair stole a march on John Major by addressing British Olympic athletes in Atlanta via satellite yesterday. The Labour leader told the UK team that sport was a "national asset" and "an investment for the whole country".

The Prime Minister had been invited to take part in the link-up but "failed to commit", according to a spokesman for the firm sponsoring it, Lycos Technologies.

Mr Blair stopped short of claiming Britain would win more medals under a Labour government, and resisted pressure from the British Olympic Association to promise more money for sport. Instead he wished the athletes "the best of luck" and launched a review of how the money the Government spends could be better spent.

"I think we have got to decide from now on that as a country we are going to treat this as a major national priority," he said.

Dick Palmer, the BOA chief speaking in America, told Mr Blair that British sport was "muddling through" due to too few resources. The rowing gold medallist, Matthew Pinsent, told the Labour leader that it was a "disgrace" for the Olympic team to be sponsored in the way it



Live link Tony Blair wishes British Olympic athletes luck via satellite as they put their case for better funding for sport

Photograph: David Rose

was, saying it needed to be "funded up to the hilt".

But Mr Blair said: "All these things can be looked at. All these things need to be reviewed urgently, we need to come out with

a proper programme and we have to stop just treating this as something you just parcel off to National Heritage and say we'll forget about it."

Pinsent told him that it was

not just a question of looking after Britain's athletes for the few weeks of the Olympics - it was necessary to look at how lottery funds were spent on sport and how young athletes make the

transition from school through to international level. "It is vital that the people we send have got everything - not just for two weeks - we need funding for 600 people in the team for a year

or two years back," he said. Fences Fiona McIntosh told Mr Blair that the problem was not just the provision of facilities but lack of good coaching for Britain's youngsters.

After Dunblane: Rejection of weapons ban sparks backlash by massacre victims' families

Fury at Tories' handgun vote

JASON BENNETTO
Crime Correspondent

Pressure grew on the Government yesterday to outlaw handguns, as a storm of protest greeted the decision by an influential group of Tory MPs not to support the banning of pistols and revolvers.

As reported in the *Independent* last Friday, an inquiry by MPs, set up after the Dunblane massacre, is deeply divided, with the majority Conservative members refusing to recommend a Labour amendment to ban handguns.

Their rejection has caused outrage among parents of the children killed and injured in Dunblane.

Labour has also seized on the decision by the House of Commons Home Affairs Select Committee as evidence of the Conservatives' kowtowing to an influential gun lobby.

Parents of the 16 children murdered in March said yesterday they hoped Lord Cullen's inquiry into the tragedy, which is due to report in September, would still recommend a ban, and that public pressure would push this through.

Steve Birnie, whose six-year-old son Matthew survived the massacre, said: "People don't want their neighbour to have half a dozen handguns in a cupboard in his home - and not

know anything about it until he breaks down and goes mad with them."

The scale of the anger and dismay expressed yesterday, at the possibility that the 200,000 handguns legally held in Britain would remain in circulation, is certain to influence the Government's thinking in the run-up to a general election.

John Greenway, one of the Tory MPs on the committee, told BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme: "We entirely understand why people might want to ban handguns in the light of Dunblane, you have got to sit down and look dispassionately at what that would mean, what the effect would be - and would it in all honesty prevent that kind of incident happening again in the future?"

"We came to the balanced view that it would not."

David Mellor, a former Home Office minister, who supports a ban, said the decision was "profoundly damaging" to the party.

He warned that they were in danger of being outflanked by Labour as the party of law and order.

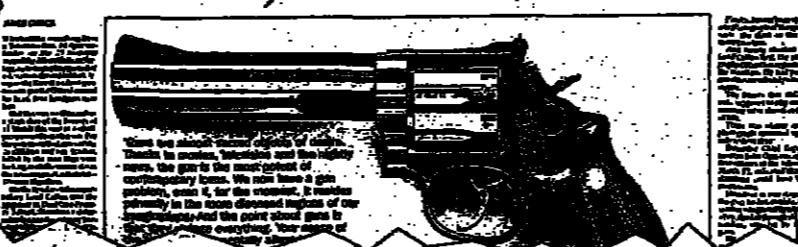
The Government has said it will wait for Lord Cullen's findings before deciding what action to take.

The police have already said they support the banning of most handguns.

THE INDEPENDENT

Dunblane Inquiry told how Hamilton took four minutes and 105 bullets to kill 17

Above all, let us be rid of this



The *Independent's* front page on 30 May, reporting the first day of the Cullen inquiry

Vagrancy to Hungerford

Controls imposed from Napoleonic days, writes Jason Bennetto

The first controls were introduced in the 1824 Vagrancy Act in the backlash against the large number of people roaming the country with weapons brought back from the Napoleonic wars.

The Act allowed the police to arrest "any person with any gun, pistol, hanger [dagger], cutlass, bludgeon or other offensive weapon ... with intent to commit a felonious act".

This was followed by the Night Poaching Acts of 1828 and 1844, the Game Act of 1831, and the Poaching Prevention Act of 1862 which made it an offence to use a firearm to shoot game illegally.

The 1870 Gun Licence Act was created to raise taxes and made it illegal for anyone to use a gun outside their own property without a licence. The first restrictions on the sale of guns came in the Pistol Act 1903, but it was not until the 1920 Firearms Act that the possession of

pistols, revolvers, rifles and ammunition first required a police firearms certificate. Machine guns have been prohibited since 1937, and all shot guns have required certificates since 1967.

The controls were consolidated in the Firearms Act 1968, which provides the basis of the current system. The essence of this is that the police must, before issuing a certificate, be satisfied that the applicant is suitable to possess a firearm or shotgun. In the case of a pistol or revolver, the police must be satisfied that they have a good reason for having the weapon.

However, Bill Tupman, former director of the Police Studies

Centre at Exeter University, believes this is the area most difficult to police. He said: "The problem remains that there is still no procedure to define what is a fit and proper person."

Holders of firearm and shotgun certificates and firearms dealers are bound to keep their weapons securely and dealers must register with the police.

The Hungerford massacre lead to the Firearms (Amendment) Act 1988, which banned self-loading rifles and semi-automatic shot guns. It also strengthened the controls on shot guns and the safe keeping of firearms.

Despite all the restrictions, at the end of 1995 there were 409,000 legally held firearms and 1,296,600 shotguns in England and Wales. In Scotland there were 32,000 firearms certificates covering 100,000 weapons and 69,000 shotgun certificates.

Strikes spread in public sector

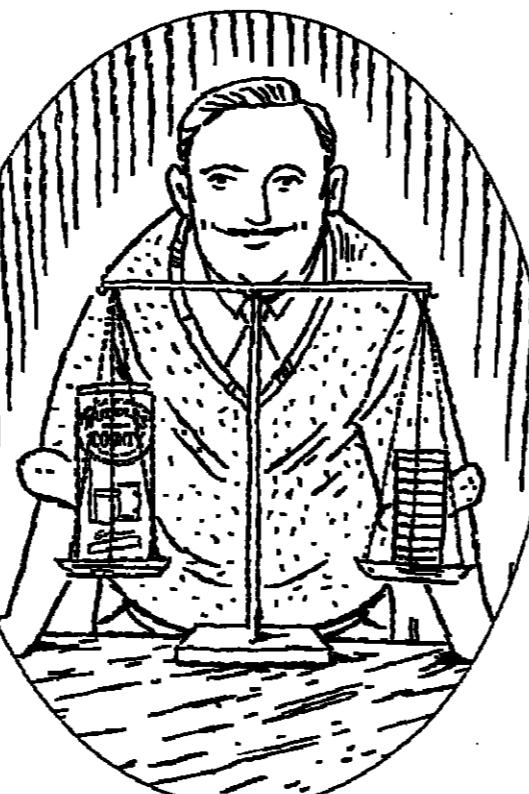
Industrial unrest in the public services yesterday spread to the rail service, the health service and JobCentres, as Royal Mail management warned postal workers' leaders that their offer to end the long-running dispute was "final", writes Barrie Clement.

Union leaders declared that rail services run by nine train operating companies faced "major disruption" after workers voted overwhelmingly to strike in two disputes over productivity pay and refreshment breaks.

In the health service, more than 350 NHS trusts and authorities yesterday failed to meet a deadline imposed by the public sector union Unison for topping up a national pay wage deal of 2 per cent.

Unison set in train a process which will end with ballots on industrial action at all NHS employers which refuse to improve on the nationwide settlement.

Meanwhile, Benefits Agency



Riddles County Riddles.

No. 9. Worth its Weight in Gold

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Ever since Riddles | from South Africa decided to | must weigh. James guessed |
| perfected packaging Riddles | put it, and James, to the test. | right (or was it the appliance |
| County in a can to such an | He invested in a reliable pair | of science?) and they |
| extent that it tastes as | of scales and put 3 special | enjoyed 2 cans each in |
| marvellous from a can as it | sample cans of Riddles County | celebration of James' skill |
| does from any bar run by a | on one side and one identical | (or was it just luck?) |
| skilled landlord, James Fuggle | can of County + 1/2 an lb of | Can you work out what |
| claimed that a can of County | Kruggers on the other side. | one of these cans must have |
| was worth its weight in gold. | Then he challenged James to | weighed? |
| One day a visiting friend | tell him how much a single can | |

£1/4lb. £1.10 each. Two cans each 1/2 lb = £1.10. One can of Kruggers = 1/2 lb = 500g. Total weight = £1.10 + £0.50 = £1.60.

SIGNIFICANT SHORTS

A man was jailed for a murder he committed 18 years ago after the teenage victim's family campaigned to have the case brought to trial.

Lynn Siddons, 16, of Derby, was stabbed 43 times and strangled during a canal-side walk with her friend Fitzroy Brookes in 1978. Fitzroy, 15 at the time, was cleared of the murder but later accused his stepfather Michael of the killing.

Yesterday, after a six-week trial and nine hours of deliberation, an Old Bailey jury returned a majority 10-2 verdict finding Michael Brookes, 51, guilty of the murder.

The murdered girl's grandmother, Flo Siddons, 81, who had spearheaded a campaign through the civil courts and eventually to the criminal courts, said she was delighted with the verdict. "At last after all these years we have justice," she said.

The court had been told how Brookes had "initiated and instigated" the murder. Fitzroy, who was the chief prosecution witness, admitted stabbing the girl half a dozen times but said it was on the orders of his stepfather who provided the fatal strokes and immersed her head in water before dumping the body.

Brookes' solicitor said his client was shocked by the verdict and planned to appeal. *PA*

The costs of putting out a whole range of civil services functions since 1992 have outweighed the savings in at least a quarter of cases, an efficiency scrutiny published by the Cabinet Office shows.

The programme has damaged staff morale and left departments equally divided over whether quality has improved, stayed the same or got worse as growing parts of the civil service have been subjected to outside competition and in many cases privatised.

But the programme has nonetheless produced net savings of between £240m and £280m for the taxpayer - around 13 to 15 per cent of the £1.8bn worth of service subjected to competition. Government departments are getting better at handling the Competing for Quality programme, the study concludes.

A police officer used a 24-inch long US-style baton to "lash" a man over the head, it was claimed at an inquest. Brian Douglas, 33, a boxing promoter, died five days later with seven skull fractures and "massive irreversible" brain damage, Southwark coroner's court was told.

Michael Francis, said Mr Douglas "stumped" silently to the ground as if he had been knocked unconscious after the attack in Clapham, south-west London, in May last year.

Police officers who arrested Mr Douglas and a friend said they had stopped them because of the way their car was being driven. The jury has been told that despite vomiting in his cell, Mr Douglas, of Balham, south-west London, was not taken to hospital until more than 12 hours after he was injured. He later sank into a coma and died, after being declared brain dead.

The hearing was adjourned until today.

A fossil showing the first evidence of flight in birds has been found by archaeologists in Spain. The fossilised animal - the size of a goldfinch - lived in the Cretaceous era, at the same time as the dinosaurs. It is the earliest discovered with an "alula" - a flap of feathers at the front of the wing, which is essential in modern birds for low-speed flight and manoeuvring.

The findings, announced yesterday in the scientific journal *Nature*, indicate that "as early as 115 million years ago, birds had evolved a sophisticated structural system that enabled them to fly at low speeds and to attain high manoeuvrability," said the Spanish researchers who made the discovery.

The new bird, named *Eoalulavis hoyasi*, offered another surprise - a full belly. "Crustacean remains found inside its belly also provide the oldest direct evidence of feeding habits in birds," said the researchers. Charles Arthur

A strain of the Aids virus which some scientists say poses a greater risk to heterosexuals than the strain most commonly found in HIV positive gay men, has been identified in the UK.

The Public Health Laboratory Service reported the first HIV subtype E in May this year, and have now identified 72 people - 60 men and 12 women - who may be infected with the strain. The majority of them contracted subtype E after heterosexual contact in Thailand, or after sex with someone who had been there, according to a report in *New Scientist*.

Subtype E is believed to have arisen in Thailand and was first reported about four years ago as a strain "adapted" for heterosexual transmission, rather than homosexual transmission, or transmission through dirty needles. A team from Harvard School of Public Health in the US last year reported that the strain was more adept at infecting cells lining the vagina and tip of the penis.

A spokesman for the Department of Health said that surveillance of subtype E was underway, and that HIV tests of donated blood "are expected to identify antibodies to all subtypes of HIV". *Liz Hunt*

Social services departments are rationing care for the elderly, mentally ill and disabled and charging more for it, a survey of local authorities conducted by Community Care magazine shows.

More than half are applying stricter criteria in deciding who qualifies for help, and nearly all now level charges. Approaching half of social services directors said some people have stopped using services because of the new or higher charges they face. *Nicholas Timmins*

The National Publishing Group, a consortium half-owned by the Electra Investment Trust and half by the merchant bankers Robert Fleming, has been chosen as the preferred bidder for HMSO, the government stationery office business. Ministers plan to complete the sale later this summer. *Nicholas Timmins*

A man who collected 2,431 protected birds eggs was fined £1,200. Durham City magistrates were told that Robert Crich, 48, of Brandon, could have been fined a maximum of £6,178,000 for the haul. He admitted specimen charges and was fined £600 for one osprey egg and £500 for a peregrine egg, plus £50 costs.

The court was told collection included the eggs of some Britain's rarest nesting birds such as red-throated diver, cormorant, goshawk, peregrine, avocet and dotterel.

A pensioner was cleared of the theft of a bag of sweets in a day-long trial that cost the taxpayer £7,600. It took a jury at the Old Bailey less than an hour to acquit Edward Green, 74, of Bracknell, Berkshire, of the theft of confectionery valued at less than £7 from Woolworth's in Maidenhead. Mr Green admitted walking out of the shop without paying but said his age made him forgetful.

THE INDEPENDENT ABROAD

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1 JULY 1996

news

Imran bowled over as Botham and Lamb lose the High Court test

JOJO MOYES

Imran Khan won the most expensive libel case in cricketing history yesterday when he successfully defended himself against accusations that he had labelled former England captain Ian Botham a ball-tamperer and a racist.

Botham said, after the trial at the High Court, that he was "astonished" at the verdict of the case, the costs of which are estimated to be up to £500,000. He and fellow cricketer Allan Lamb had sued Imran, the teetotal, Oxford-educated former Pakistan captain, over an "offensive personal attack" in *India Today* magazine, which, they claimed, suggested that they were racist, not properly educated and of inferior social standing.

Botham, alone, sued over a report in the *Sun* which, he alleged, accused him of ball-tampering — something he says he has never done.

Imran, who denied libel, said his words were taken out of context and he was only trying to defend himself against allegations of cheating made against him in a previous newspaper report.

As the jury returned two majority verdicts in his favour, after five hours of deliberation, Imran appeared stunned. His pregnant wife Jemima, who had accompanied him throughout the two-and-a-half-week trial, appeared to be as surprised as he was, and as she left the court said the result was "amazing".

Cricket's most expensive libel case has ended — with a surprise verdict for both parties

telling her mother: "I'm such a cynic." Outside the court, Imran said he was "overjoyed" by the result and paid tribute to the support of his wife.

"I thank the Almighty, that whatever I've been saying for the past two years, that I've been vindicated, that I never called anyone a racist, under-class or cheat," he said.

Imran believed that the result vindicated Pakistani cricketers who he said had been called cheats, and he added that he hoped the issue of ball-tampering would be laid to rest once and for all.

He also said he was sad that the case had come to court and that he felt "sad" for Botham. Imran, his wife, and their family were said to be celebrating last night.

Imran's solicitor, Howard Cohen, said he was "absolutely delighted" and that Imran would pay only a "very small proportion" of costs which, he said, for Botham and Lamb, were estimated at more than £300,000 for last week alone.

In a brief press conference outside his solicitor's offices



Victorious: Imran Khan and his wife Jemima outside the High Court yesterday

Photograph: Andrew Buurman



'Astonished': Botham (top) and Lamb (below) expected to win



How cricket was caught out tampering with the evidence

What struck me was how small the place was. Court 13 may have been full of giants like Ian Botham and Imran Khan, and their respective counsel Charles Gray and George Carman, but from the witness box they seemed very small.

Having been subpoenaed by Imran's solicitors, I began by facing the gentle medium-pace of Mr Carman. No rough ride here, though the jury looked as if they'd reached saturation point over cricket balls and the thousand and one ways to tamper with them.

Mr Carman was clearly never a

Derek Pringle delivers his verdict on a case for the tea-room

cricketer. Although I'd gone to court prepared to be bamboozled by ancient legal phrases such as *Qui omni dicit nihil excludit* (He who says everything excludes nothing), his use of terms like "baton down the ball" had everyone flummoxed.

As he rested, Mr Gray came on to bowl a hostile spell from the Botham-Lamb end.

Where it not for the potentially huge costs involved, and the murkiness of its central tenet — what is and isn't considered cheating — the

whole event could be trivialised and serialised into a soap opera.

Cheating is an emotive word in any sport, particularly in cricket, which is seen in certain quarters as a by-word for fair play. In professional cricket, though, what may be set down in the law has been systematically bent by players for generations. Which is why picking the seam and the use of lip-salve to preserve the ball's condition have long been accepted by both professional players and the umpires

fusing. I'm sure other people will find it confusing as well," he added.

On the issue of the costs, Botham said he had not had time to think about the implications, but he added: "Life goes on. I'll just have to do a

couple more road shows to pay for it."

Allan Lamb, who also professed himself "astonished" said: "The jury's got to make their decision and we've got to accept it." Asked his opinion of Imran, he said: "Still the same."

The Andropatch will benefit between 20,000-30,000 men who suffer from hypogonadism (testosterone deficiency). Dr Richard Foulds, medical director of the manufacturer, SmithKline Beecham Pharmaceuticals, said they wanted to encourage a responsible attitude towards prescribing the patches. However, executives know they have struck a goldmine. The idea of the male menopause has become fixed in the minds of many men who see no reason why they should not receive a testosterone boost.

Leading article, page 15



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arts news

Lottery cash to sweep museums into 21st century

MARIANNE MACDONALD

Arts Correspondent

Up to £500m of National Lottery money is to be thrown into technology to enhance the accessibility of museums, the Government announced yesterday in its first full review of museum policy since the Thirties.

The money will be made available over the next four years to develop museums and galleries. Following changes in lottery rules, it could be used to put museums on the Internet. Virginia Bottomley, the Secretary of State for National Heritage, said:

"The National Gallery, the National Portrait Gallery and the Natural History Museum, all based physically in London, are also accessible through Internet sites or CD-Roms, and Mrs Bottomley wants to see more use of information technology. The review aims at raising standards of museums and galleries, improving the stewardship of collections and access to them, enhancing museums' educational role and helping them to harness new technology."

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All frills: A dancer at the Royal Opera House, during rehearsals for *Cinderella*. Plans to stage *The Nutcracker* were changed because both the Kirov and ENO companies were due to perform the same ballet this autumn

Photograph: Laurie Lewis

Bodices and breeches top the TV schedules

Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* is to form the centrepiece of BBC1's autumn schedule, it was revealed yesterday, as the television trend for adapting 19th century literary classics continued unabated.

The three-part adaptation is to star Tara Fitzgerald, Rupert Graves and Toby Stephens, son of the actress Maggie Smith.

A surprising choice in many ways, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* is one of the Brontë sisters' least accessible novels. It is the story of Helen, a beautiful young mother forced to flee her debauched and unfaithful husband, Arthur Huntingdon, to live with her brother, Lawrence.

Charlotte Brontë suggested that the unpleasant husband was based on their dissolute brother Branwell, and after it was published readers considered the novel excessively morbid – a far cry from *Pride and Prejudice*, the recent Jane Austen adaptation.

BBC1's £162m schedule faces tough competition from ITV, which earlier this month attacked the BBC on its own ground by announcing it would screen an adaptation of Austen's *Emma* this autumn by Andrew Davies, who wrote the acclaimed *Pride and Prejudice* for the BBC.

ITV has lined up two other audience-grabbing costume dramas: the continuation of the popular *Poldark* series – without the original stars – and an adaptation of Defoe's rollicking *Moll Flanders*.

It has also confirmed rumours that a fourth episode of *Coronation Street* would go out at 7.30pm on Sundays from the end of November in a bid to bump up Sunday night ratings.

BBC1 meanwhile will offer a

revamped version of *Clive Anderson Talks Back*, the chat show formerly on Channel 4, called *All Talk*, and former *EastEnders* star Letitia Dean in a comedy drama set in the 1950s, *The Hello Girls*, about a group of telephone operators.

In another major drama, BBC1 will be telling the story of the Victorian adventurer Cecil Rhodes, starring the ex-*Professional* actor, Martin Shaw, in an eight-part series which took 10 years to make and



Tara Fitzgerald: 'Wildfell Hall'

used 10,000 South African extras.

Returning series include *Hettie Wainthrop Investigates*, *Casualty*, *Crocodile Shoes* and *Pie in the Sky*. There will be a one-off *Absolutely Fabulous* special and a reworking of an old favourite in *The Legacy of Reginald Perrin*.

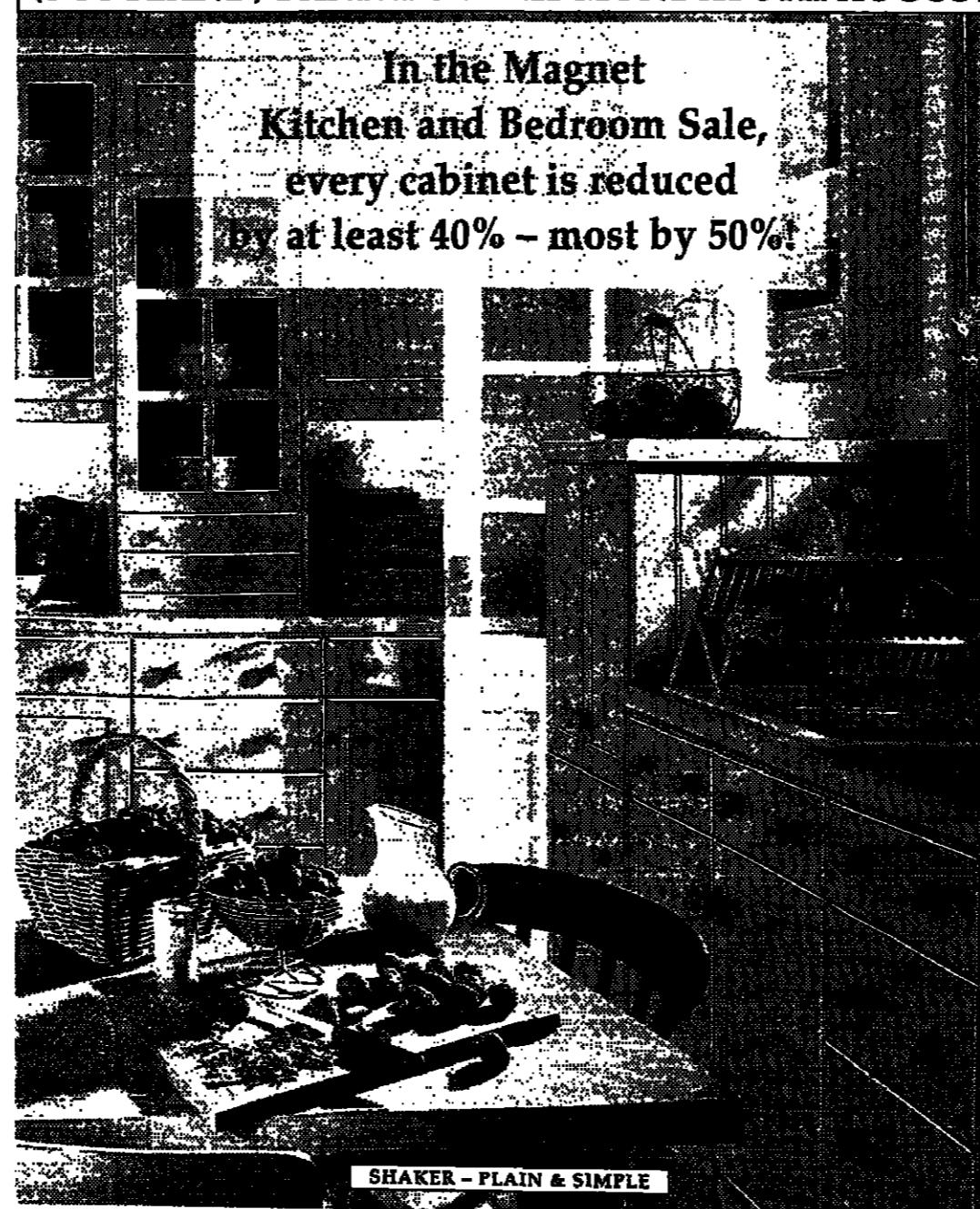
Upcoming documentaries include the story of Britain's secret "collusion" with France and Israel in *The Suez Crisis* to mark the 40th anniversary of the conflict, and film premières include Al Pacino in *Carlito's Way*, Sharon Stone in *Silver*, and Michael Douglas in *Falling Down*.

Giving a

Papers clear
of contempt
Knights tria

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Giving a new chance to an old forest friend

KATE WATSON-SMYTH

A national scheme to save one of Britain's most endangered species - the red squirrel - from extinction was launched in London yesterday.

At the turn of the century, the creature was so widespread that it was viewed as a pest, but since the introduction of the grey squirrel, its numbers have declined so dramatically that it faces extinction within 20 years.

Dr Tom Tew, senior mammalogist with the Joint Nature Conservation Committee, said: "They are declining before our eyes, and if we are going to tip the balance back in favour of red squirrels, we must conserve the few we have left until their habitat can be changed to suit them."

Only about 160,000 red squirrels survive, in just a few areas of the country, compared with about 2.5 million greys. There are colonies in forests in Scotland and parts of Wales, as well as a few outposts in Cumbria and Northumbria. Small populations still survive near Thetford in Norfolk, Cannock Chase in Staffordshire and on the Isle of Wight, where the grey has failed to establish itself. The grey is so much stronger, that within 15 years of arriving in an area, the red squirrels have usually completely disappeared.

Now, the JNCC has produced a plan for foresters,



Afterlife: A taxidermist at work. The 'grey menace' means all red squirrels could be museum pieces in 20 years. Photograph: Will Walker/North News

landowners and local groups to encourage the preservation of the red squirrel. This includes the planting of coniferous trees (its natural habitat) and thinning out some deciduous

forests. Grey squirrels are to be discouraged from foraging in red territory by depriving them of their footholds in the forests. Reds love ripe hazelnuts, but because the greys can digest

them before they mature, the reds eventually starve to death.

In some areas, where the threat from the greys is extreme, the population will be controlled, but there are no

plans to exterminate the breed.

Dr Tew said: "There are two time-scales here. The first is to preserve the red squirrels we have, and the second is to provide them with the correct

environment to thrive, away from the grey squirrels.

"This is going to take us decades, but if we don't do it we will lose the red squirrel forever."

Britain's other destructive imports

Grey squirrels were brought into Britain from North America in 1876 by a Cheshire landowner who wanted an exotic addition to his estate. Since then, several other exotic breeds have been brought into the country, only to wreak havoc among our indigenous animals.

THE AMERICAN MINK was brought over from America at the turn of the century and bred for its fur. Several escaped after the Second World War and they can now be found all over the country. It is semi-aquatic and lives along the banks of rivers, where it eats water voles and moorhens. **THE MUNTJAC DEER** was introduced from China in the early 1900s. The size of a small dog, it is thought to have escaped from the Duke of Bedford's estate at Woburn Abbey. They eat large quantities of bluebells, which are in decline, and will often deprive the native roe deer of food. **THE COYOTE** was also imported for its fur, but when the industry collapsed, many farmers simply released them into the wild. The coyote, a South American rodent, has big yellow teeth and resembles an aggressive beaver. It was exterminated in the late 1980s but only after it had caused significant damage to the East Anglian reedbeds.

THE AMERICAN BULLFROG was probably brought over by enthusiastic animal lovers looking for an exotic pet. However, it grows to about eight inches in size and is then released by the horrified owner. Once out in the wild it feasts on our indigenous frogs.

THE AMERICAN CRAYFISH was introduced as an alternative to British lobster but it brought disease with it. Those that have escaped from fish farms are spreading a type of plague among the Signal crayfish.

THE NEW ZEALAND FLATWORM has been a source of grief to gardeners for some years. Believed to have been brought over by mistake in the soil of imported plants, it has proceeded to munch its way through large quantities of earthworms.

First, shoot three rodents ...

For those who would like to take advantage of the huge population, here is a recipe taken from Shoot and Cook, by Old Henry.

GREY SQUIRREL WITH PRUNES

Ingredients: 3 squirrels; 2/3 tablespoons of butter; 2 onions; 12 dried prunes; 3 tablespoons of wine vinegar; a pinch of thyme; 1 tablespoon of flour; salt and pepper.

Skin, clean and joint the squirrels and leave them to soak in cold water for 30 minutes. Brown the joints in a large pan and then set aside. Put the onions and butter into the pan and fry. When light brown, put the squirrel joints back in the pan and add the flour, salt and enough water to cover the meat. Add the vinegar and salt and pepper to taste. Cook for about one hour, until the meat is tender, then add the prunes, reduce the heat and simmer for about 45 minutes. Next, make a roux with the stock, blend and add to the casserole and leave to thicken.

Serve with potatoes.

Papers cleared of contempt in Knights trial

PATRICIA WYNNE DAVIES
Legal Affairs Editor

Pre-trial reporting of a fight involving Geoff Knights, the boyfriend of *EastEnders* actress Gillian Taylforth, did not break the contempt laws - despite the sensational halting of his subsequent criminal trial because coverage in the tabloids had been oppressive.

The surprise ruling from the High Court yesterday was seen as giving the go ahead to trial by media. But in answer to charges brought by the Attorney General, Sir Nicholas Lyell, under the 1981 Contempt of Court Act, Lord Justice Schiemann and Mr Justice Smedley insisted it was quite possible for a judge to stop a criminal trial because of prejudice caused by the totality of press coverage but for no individual publication to be guilty of contempt.

Sir Nicholas had asked the court to fine the *Daily Mail*, *Daily Mirror*, *Daily Star*, *The Sun* and the now-defunct *Today* after Judge Roger Sanders stopped the trial of Knights on charges of wounding Martin Davies, the soap star's chauffeur, with intent. The judge ruled that pre-trial coverage had been "unlawful, misleading, scandalous and malicious", and "so unfair, outrageous and oppressive" that a fair trial was impossible.

It was thought to have been the first time adverse publicity alone had led a judge to halt a trial. The Act outlaws publication of material that would

cause a "substantial risk of serious prejudice" to a trial and from the moment of arrest.

Between them the papers detailed Knights' previous convictions for violence, interviewed witnesses and gave exaggerated accounts of the alleged crime. After the arrest of Mr Knights in April 1995 "what one would have expected to be treated as *sub judice* became an opportunity for certain newspaper editors to take it upon themselves to try Mr Knights in their columns," Judge Sanders said.

One of the flaws of the 1981 Act is that it ignores the cumulative effect of publicity. Each report has to be examined individually to see whether it could have influenced a juror. An additional feature of the case was that Knights "colour past" had already been the subject of massive publicity.

The judges said it was "difficult to see how any one of the publications . . . created any greater risk of serious prejudice than that which had already been created".

Philip Havens, for the Attorney General, said the press "may well conclude that they have very considerable freedom to publish what they choose at the time of arrest". Leave to appeal was refused and Sir Nicholas will now have to apply directly to the Law Lords.

The exercise has so far cost the taxpayer around £250,000. The papers' costs were ordered to be paid out of central funds.

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news



CHRIS BLACKHURST
Westminster Correspondent

Peter Davis, director-general of Oflot, the National Lottery regulator, was heavily criticised by an all-party group of MPs yesterday for taking free flights from one of the members of the Camelot consortium, the game's operator.

Mr Davis was on holiday and was unavailable for comment on the damning report from the powerful Commons Public Accounts Committee

(PAC). National Heritage, the department Mr Davis answers to, said it would study the report and respond in due course.

While the report was not unexpected – Mr Davis was roasted by MPs when he appeared before them last December – the severity of the criticism, high by the exacting standards of the PAC and unprecedented for an industry watchdog, raises questions about Mr Davis's future.

To heighten his discomfiture, the committee not only

said it was "unwise" of him to accept the free flights, and that he had made "serious errors of judgment", they were also "impressed" by his reasoning that the trips were made only after the lottery licence had been awarded by him to Camelot.

The report also fuelled the continuing row between Oflot and Richard Branson, the Virgin chief, over the rejection of his bid to run the draw, by highlighting questions over G-Tech, the lottery specialist and member of the Camelot group. "The

committee were concerned at the information they had which raised doubts about the fitness of G-Tech... This included suggestions of undesirable business practices by G-Tech in obtaining lottery contracts in the United States, including alleged corrupt payments in California, Kentucky and New Jersey made to various persons, including a state Senator."

It was vital, the committee said, that Mr Davis investigate any allegations of impropriety about the Lottery. They wel-

comed his decision to hold an internal inquiry into the claim by Mr Branson that Guy Snowden, chief operating officer of G-Tech had tried to bribe him. Last week, this inquiry cleared Mr Snowden of the charge. However, Mr Branson refused to give evidence. The bribery charge will now be settled in the courts where Mr Snowden's action for libel against Mr Branson is heard.

By then, Mr Davis may have lost his job. The committee said he was "unwise" to use a corporate aircraft owned by G-Tech – which has a 22 per cent stake in Camelot – on a fact-finding mission around the US in October 1994. Mr Davis's reasoning that it was cheaper for the taxpayer cut little ice.

The committee also criticised his decision to stay at the New York home of Carl Manges, head of a US investment firm with a 25 per cent holding in G-Tech. The MPs said they recognised that the friendship between the two men's wives pre-dated the creation of the

Lottery. But they said: "We regard it as of vital importance that the director-general should be seen by the public to be completely impartial."

The MPs also said they were "impressed" by Mr Davis's argument that he had accepted the free flights only after he had announced his decision to award the licence to Camelot. "In our view, the director-general's decisions to use G-Tech corporate aircraft represented serious errors of judgement on his part," the report said.

Housing: The countryside is under pressure

Towns to grow in green fields

CHARLIE BAIN

Fields will disappear under bricks and concrete if land is to be found for the millions of homes needed for a growing number of households, a major study revealed yesterday.

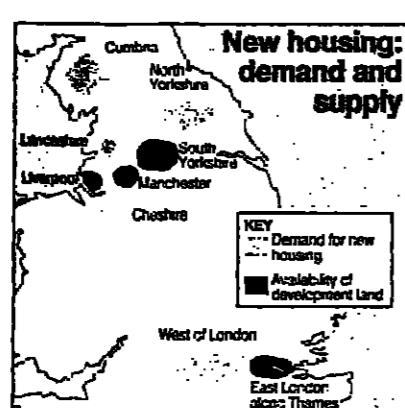
The Government estimates that almost 4.5 million new homes are needed over the next 20 years. But an investigation into where they may be built reveals a mismatch between demand and supply of land – and this could have a dramatic effect on the landscape of southern England.

As people continue to leave the cities, planners say that "large-scale use" of undeveloped land is "inevitable".

Their study, produced by the Town and Country Planning Association and the Joseph Rowntree Trust, warns that while the Government policy of using former industrial sites for development means that half of all housing is now built on recycled or "brownfield" land, this will decline in the years ahead.

Professor Peter Hall, of University College, London, who co-edited the report, said that the pressure to move out of cities "threatens current policies which encourage sustainable, environmentally sensitive development".

Demand for land in the south east is strongest west of London, but most former industrial land



lies to the east. In the north west, land is available in Manchester and Liverpool but most new housing is needed in Cheshire, Cumbria and rural Lancashire. In Yorkshire and Humberside demand is in the north – but most brownfield sites are in South Yorkshire.

Solutions to finding enough land, says the report, include spreading into protected green belt countryside, building along rail corridors, filling vacant sites within urban areas and creating new villages and towns.

Tony Burton, a senior planner with the Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) said: "Commitment to urban renewal should be the starting point in the debate."

It is significant that the idea of new towns has returned, af-

ter nearly a decade of intense opposition exemplified by anger over plans to build over Foxley Wood in Berkshire.

Now new towns are on the drawing-board for Hampshire, Kent, Berkshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, East Sussex, Cambridgeshire, Cheshire, Gloucestershire and Devon, plus "bolt-on"

new towns complete with 5,500 homes to be built next to Peterborough, the Hanson Trust. In Hampshire, Eagle Star have drawn up plans to build an 8,000-home new town at Micheldever, on 1,000 acres of arable land beside the main railway line from Southampton to Waterloo.

While the dogs worked with gusto,

more than 1,000 potential buyers scrutinised their every move in the main arena at Malvern, near Worcester.

The six Brecknock Hill Cheviots which the dogs were rounding up looked decidedly frisky. But auctioneer Mike Tompkinson remained cool as one dog chased a sheep out of the arena and then a keen young bitch bit a ewe in the

flock. "The bitch is only being friendly," he told the crowd.

Talk among insiders was of how one Welsh farmer had just sold a top sheepdog for £25,000 in a private sale. But Aubrey Hughes, 63, was content after his 18-month-old sheepdog Sam was knocked down to a Derbyshire farmer for £1,110. Farmers see it as money well spent. "It would probably take four or five men to do

sheepdog's work," said Harcourt Lloyd, 55, from Trefeglwys, in Powys, whose dog Joe was third in the Welsh Open Championships this year.

The sale catalogue paid tribute to all the dogs, including four-year-old Fan, (sire Spot, dam: Trim): "Outstanding farm bitch. Travels on farm bike and follows horse... will move anything. Good bitches should come into season soon. Excellent."

Sheepdog for sale: travels on farm bike and follows horse

RICHARD SMITH

It was a nerve-wracking time for the flat-capped farmers waving crooks and calling the tune with whistles and shouts of "come by", as a select band of 45 working sheepdogs with names like Moss and Floss were put through their paces yesterday during the big sheepdog auction at Sheep '96.

While the dogs worked with gusto,

Heels: Muf (left, with fur) and Tri, of Hewly Farm in Sussex, watch the sheepdog trials at Sheep '96 in Malvern yesterday. Photograph: Rob Stratton

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مكتبة من الأصل

international

Railways are back. Over the past few years people and governments the world over have realised they are the only environmentally friendly means of mass transport for passengers and freight. Congestion, combined with the social and environmental cost which is the result of unrestricted use of motor vehicles, have led to a return to what was decried in the post-war decades as an outmoded form of transport, doomed to be superseded by the all-conquering motor.

Immense sums are being poured into railways and organisations which had often dwindled into bloated bureaucracies are being reshaped on more businesslike lines.

Over the next few weeks the *Independent* will be reflecting this renaissance of rail the world over in a series of articles. They will not be mere accounts of Great (or Lesser) railway journeys.

They will be snapshots of every aspect of rail travel, from the economic to the architectural, reflecting the sheer excitement engendered by every aspect of a rail journey as well

Every country gets the trains that it deserves

as the whole world of railways, trains, stations – and railwaymen.

We hope these reflections will provide a picture of the way railways remain an essential part of social and economic life of countries throughout the world.

We also hope they will not only fascinate our readers as much as they do the *Independent* staff but also provoke them to think about what we should be doing to encourage the new era of rail travel.

The series is based on a simple observation: that today, as in the past, railway systems represent a country's capacity to organise its transport systems and thus, by implication other less obvious public functions, in a sane and economic manner.

It has often been said newspapers represent a nation talking to itself. Similarly, railways represent a society, a community, in motion. Their re-emergence is an echo of the way that

during the 19th century they created the modern world.

Nations such as Belgium, Italy and Canada could not have existed without them. Empires steamed along the lines built by the conquerors. They defined time, they defined distance, they liberated man's imagination.

The industrial revolution depended on them. They alone could transport the masses of food required to feed growing cities. The railway between London and Wiltshire was known as the Milky Way and the fishermen of far-off Cornwall timed their arrivals in harbour to coincide with the train timetable.

Mass movement of people, as emigrants and later as tourists, relied on them. The very stations were rightly called "temples of steam" and remain some of the finest monuments to the Victorian age.

Some of these themes find their echoes today. Splendid stations, like Nicholas Grimshaw's masterpiece at Waterloo, are being built for the first time in half a century; and the association of railways with imperialism is finding a new echo in railways being built by Iran to strengthen its links with the Central Asian republics and steer them towards thinking of the Gulf, rather than Moscow, as their natural link with the



RIDING THE IRON ROAD

A community in motion, a nation on the move; **Nicholas Faith**, introducing our summer series, says railways are undergoing a worldwide renaissance

Yet they are recognisably the same means of transport first developed to carry coal between the mines and rivers and the sea in north-east England in the 1820s.

The new ultra-fast trains, running at up to 200mph through France and Spain and Germany and Japan and Italy – still rely on steel wheels running on steel rails which are still set, as in George Stephenson's day, 4ft 8½in (1.435m) apart.

So, of course, is Eurostar, the train service which, steadily but surely, is drawing London and south-east England into a closer relationship with the Continent than with far-off, and equally foreign, Scotland and thus doing more for our links with Europe than a thousand speeches.

In *The Old Patagonian Express*, Paul Theroux summed up the feeling that today, as in the past, railways provided an accurate reflection of the moral, cultural, social, economic state of a particular

country. "The seedy, distressed country has seedy, distressed trains; the proud, efficient nation is similarly reflected in its rolling stock, as Japan is."

There is hope in India because the trains are considered vastly more important than the donkey wagons some Indians drive.

By these standards most countries throughout the world are striving towards the better society represented by a superior railway system and prepared to pay heavily for the benefits.

They are building tunnels – between Denmark and Sweden as well as under the Channel – they are constructing high-speed lines, not only throughout Western Europe, but also in Korea – and between Moscow and St. Petersburg. They can even be adapted to take masses of lorries off the roads – in the United States, road-haulage companies are transferring much of their long-haul traffic on to the railways.

which had been pronounced near dead until the late 1970s, but which have been miraculously rejuvenated by freedom from government regulation.

And, finally, how does Britain fare in these comparisons? Bluntly, as a country which is slipping inexorably into the Third World.

Britain, a crowded island eminently suited to rail travel, is the only country apart from the United States unable to contemplate abolishing the subsidies given to road transport in the form of company allowances, ludicrously low taxation of heavy lorries, and relatively cheap petrol.

Privatisation, this government's magic cure-all, is simply a pathetic attempt to evade society's responsibilities towards its transport systems, combined with a fragmentation which makes the simplest and most obvious investment an intolerably prolonged affair – and ensures that the rails themselves, unlike the roads, let alone the rails in other countries, actually have to make a profit.

Nicholas Faith

Lebanon dreams of peaceful connections



Rack and ruin: A Swiss locomotive that once hauled Kaiser Wilhelm's train over the Lebanon mountains rusts amid war wreckage at Beirut central station

Photograph: Robert Fisk

Beirut — Just opposite Abdullah Chehab's desk is a sheaf of Cellophane-covered files that may constitute one of the biggest – and, sadly, the emptiest – dreams in railway history. As Mr Chehab opens page after page of maps, a brand-new railway network for post-war Lebanon runs across the paper.

It snakes green and red, through the ancient Crusader port of Byblos, follows the permanent way laid down by the Royal Engineers and Australian army in 1941, cuts inland through the Hezbollah shacks of south Beirut, then streaks south to the port of Tyre, scarcely 12 miles from the Israeli border. The two-track, 120-kph electric rail would cost £329m.

Reality, however, is just a platform away. For Mr Chehab – who rejoices in the title of Director-General of Lebanese State Railways – does not have a single working train to his name. The closest locomotives to his office stand only a hundred yards from his door, rust-covered and weed-enshrouded, wheels strangled in bushes, the pride of the Ottoman Empire's 19th-century Levantine railway system, pock-marked with 20th-century bullet holes.

The great Swiss Winterthur rack-and-pinion locos carried the Emperor Kaiser Wilhelm across the mountains to the Roman ruins of Baalbek in 1898, freighted Turkish troops towards Syria during the First World War and starred numerous Lebanese films until brought low by the outbreak of civil war in 1975.

That is the gentlest way of describing the fate of the Lebanese railway system. Across the country, the great green-painted steam locos of the French mandate lie rusting on broken sidings, their funnels and cabs and tenders the haunt of birds and rats, their tracks littered with the wreckage of flaking carriages once purchased from the railways of the British Raj. At Rayak – the twin terminus with Baghdad for the original Orient Express – the Syrian army have camped amid the ancient steamers, their gun emplacements sprouting amid the steam-pipes and pistons, a bunch of anti-aircraft guns dug in near the engine sheds.

Perhaps armies are psychologically drawn towards the railways that carried their ancestors to and from the wars of the early 20th century. In Tripoli, the old PLO front line, now a pile of tattered grey sandbags, runs in front of the locomotive sheds while Syrian special forces troops have installed themselves behind the grass-covered turntables. Still dripping the last oil poured

into their machinery more than two decades ago, the big 4-6-2s rot in sidings close to the 15th-century Tower of the Lions. One of these locos has received a direct hit from an artillery shell that smashed through the cab and ricocheted into a decaying goods wagon. All are peppered with bullet holes.

Widely believed to be of French manufacture, it took one of the world's leading enthusiasts of Levantine railways – a Manchester rabbi – to identify them correctly as German. Originally pulling the big expresses of the pre-First World War Reichsbahn, they were cedared to France as war reparations under the 1919 Treaty of Versailles and transferred by France to its newly mandated territory in Lebanon and Syria, acquired under the League of Nations at the same time Britain took control of Palestine and Transjordan. For more than half a century, they pulled passenger expresses between Tripoli and the Syrian city of Homs, only to end their days when Lebanon broke apart in 1976. Thus did German locomotives of the Kaiser's Reich fall victim to the bullets and shells of Lebanese Christian militias, Syria and the PLO.

Mr Chehab wants to restore the Rayak railhead and reopen the line to Homs, re-linking Tripoli with the Syrian city at the same time. He is toying with the idea of restoring a rack-and-pinion track over the mountains but agrees that a new permanent way and new tunnels would be needed for the system. In the last years of the civil war, much of the track was torn up. The Christian Phalange militia ripped up the rails of the old British army ammunition line along the coast south of Beirut to use the rail-bed as a military supply route for lorry-mounted mortars. Further south, holiday chalets have been built over the track.

In 1982, the Israelis bombed down the last rack-and-pinion railway bridge east of Dahr al-Baidur after failing to hit the main mountain highway. They tried – and failed – to destroy the stout, French-built tunnel at Mdeirej in which the Syrian army had stored ammunition. But the railways of Lebanon had other, less militant enemies. When I took the last working train from Beirut to Byblos five years ago – a roaring Polish diesel pulling two tiny, bullet-splattered wooden carriages – the driver had to stop 18 times because cars had been parked on the tracks. In the southern suburbs, entire eight-storey apartment blocks – illegally built but none the less permanent, stand on top of the permanent way.

Mr Chehab is unimpressed. "We own the line and we're not paying compensation," he says firmly.

But his resolution falters when you ask about costs. "The project for the new railway must be passed by parliament and the cabinet. It will be ... built, operated and transported by a single company. But it depends a great deal on the 'peace process'." A dodgy prospect, I suggest, especially after Benjamin Netanyahu's election victory in Israel. "I am not a politician," Mr Chehab replies carefully. "But I would say that the entire project depends to-

tally on the 'peace process'." And then, of course, it all becomes clear. The new main line to Tyre is supposed to continue further south through the ruins of the Roman forum at Tyre, down the bed of the old track to the border at Naqoura to link up with the old British main line north of Nahariya. Beirut's railway line is being projected on the assumption it will go all the way to Israel, on to Tel Aviv, even to Cairo.

And there the dreams have to end. The Lebanese government still pays its 150 railway staff for work on a track that has not seen a train in two decades but Mr Chehab is being hived off to work on the bureaucracy of this year's Lebanese elections.

I ask Mr Chehab if a steam train will ever run again in Lebanon. Slowly, looking at his desk, he shakes his head. "No, they'll not run again. I don't want to get rid of them. We will keep them for now. I had a thought of maybe a Lebanese railway museum. Unless there is someone else interested." British, I suggest? And Mr Chehab's face lights up.

Robert Fisk

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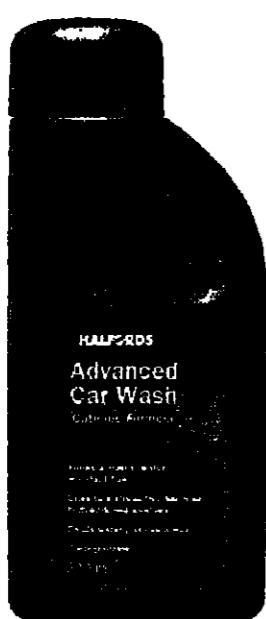
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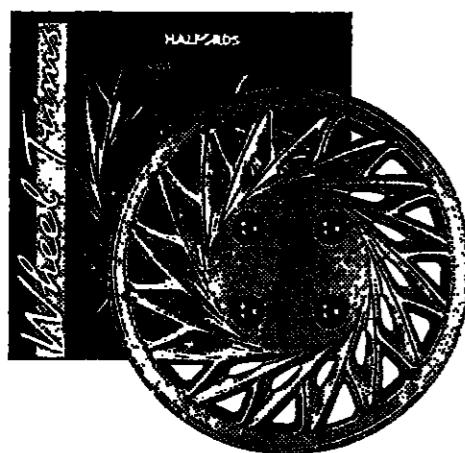
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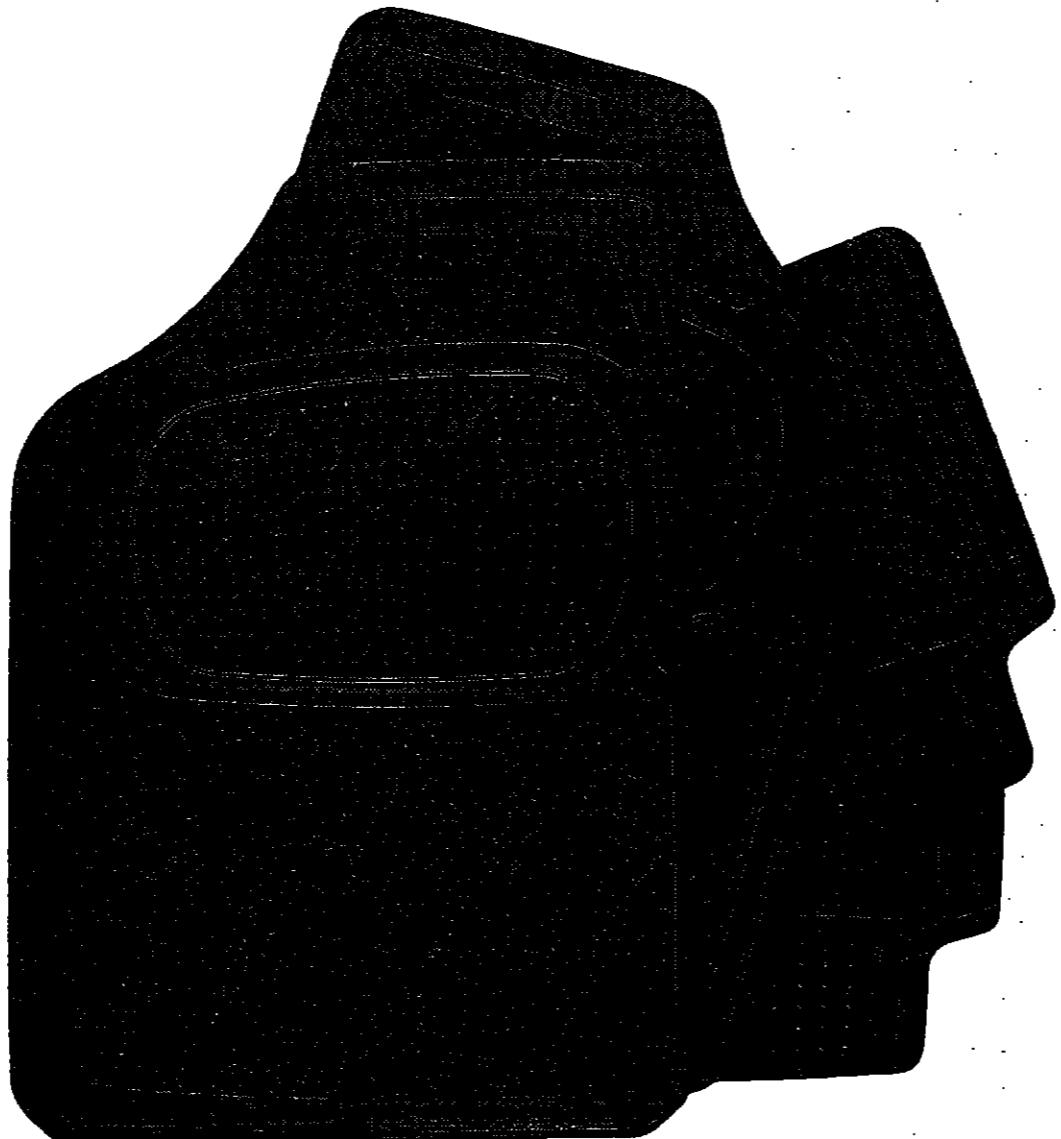
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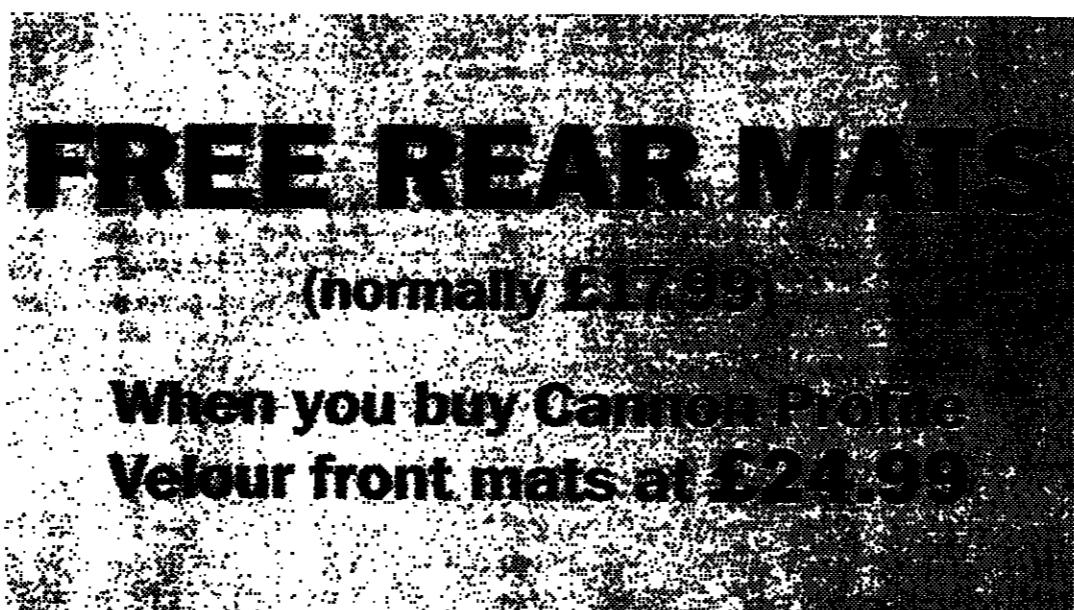


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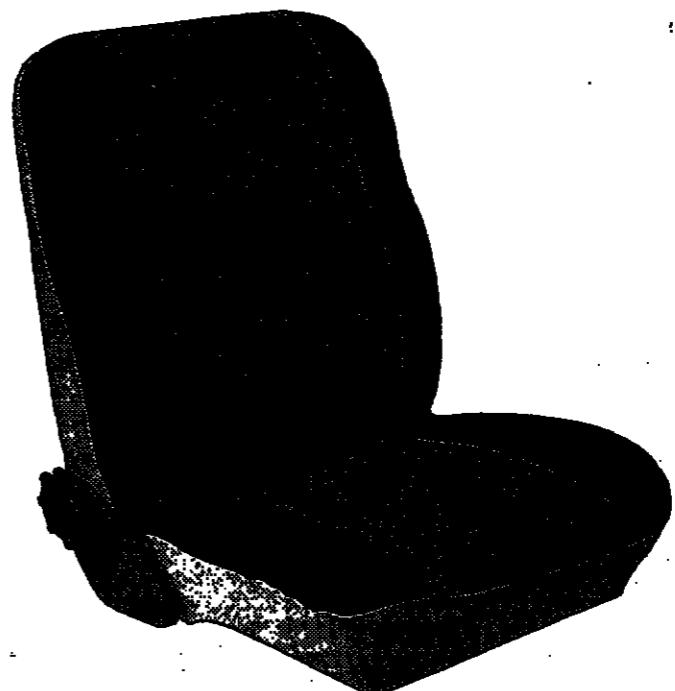
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مكتباً من الأفضل

international

Atlanta 'hero' denies placing bomb

PHIL DAVISON
Atlanta

For several days, he was trumpeted as the all-American hero of the Olympics. Richard Jewell, a podgy 17-stone security guard and former policeman, was the man who had spotted the suspicious knapsack that turned out to be a bomb in Atlanta's crowded Centennial Park last Saturday. "Had it not been for Richard, there could have been dozens of fatalities instead of two," his colleagues said.

Yesterday, FBI agents questioned Mr Jewell for the second day and searched the Atlanta apartment where he lives with his mother, looking for evidence that might show he planted the bomb himself.

"We are treating him as a suspect," an FBI agent said, although Mr Jewell was not under detention.

He could be seen yesterday, sitting on a stairwell outside the apartment with FBI agents while others conducted a detailed search inside.

FBI sources said evidence against Mr Jewell, described by former colleagues as having been "a gung-ho cop with a history of over-zealous policing", was so far only circumstantial. The case against the bomber would hinge on evidence still being studied in FBI laboratories in Washington. That includes fragments of the pipe bomb, a green knapsack it was left in and the nearby pay-phone from which a warning call was made about 20 minutes before the bomb went off.

Mr Jewell, who had gone from talk show to talk show in the first three days after the bomb, appearing as a shy, retiring hero, denied involvement. "Did you do it?" A reporter shouted as he arrived at local FBI offices for questioning. "No, sir, I did not do this," he replied. FBI special agent David Tubb told a crowd of reporters outside the flat: "This search does not constitute evidence of guilt. [It] is part of an ongoing investigative process. Mr Jewell has been

fully co-operative. He has not been charged with any crime."

The news that the would-be hero may have been the bomber stunned Atlanta, still trying to come to terms with the blast that ripped through Centennial Park, the bustling social point of the Olympics, during a concert at 1.30am last Saturday.

Many Atlantans, Olympic officials and athletes expressed relief that a suspect had been found. Many were shocked to realise that a single person may have been responsible for an in-

cident which came close to halting the Games. That the bomber may have been a security guard assigned to protect Centennial Park added to the disbelief.

The FBI came under criticism yesterday for apparently leaking the news that Mr Jewell was a suspect before having enough evidence to detain or charge him.

First Lady Hillary Clinton visited the site of the bomb yesterday and saw what has become a kind of shrine, with hundreds of thousands of visitors leaving flowers, their national flags, and

Muslim plea over Mostar

TONY BARBER
Europe Editor

Bosnia's Muslim-led government demanded international action against Croatia yesterday to overcome a crisis in the divided city of Mostar that is threatening Bosnia's first post-war elections next month.

Bosnia's Prime Minister, Hasan Muratovic, told a meeting of Islamic countries in Geneva: "This is the last moment for the international community to direct its activity towards the Republic of Croatia to bring about the implementation of what it signed [in the Dayton peace agreement]."

Croat political leaders in Mostar, supported by President Franjo Tudjman of Croatia, have refused to accept the results of municipal elections in June that gave a narrow victory to their Muslim rivals. The Croats have boycotted what was supposed to be a newly united city council, thereby perpetuating Mostar's division into Croat and Muslim sectors.

International mediators say that, if the Croat boycott is allowed to continue, it will discredit the all-Bosnian elections on 14 September. Even without the Croat boycott, the elections are likely to be flawed because of Bosnian Serb opposition to fundamental elements of the Dayton agreement.

Mr Muratovic appealed to the outside world to freeze economic relations with Croatia as punishment for its refusal to make the Bosnian Croats dissolve their self-styled state of Herzeg-Bosnia. The Dayton agreement stipulated Herzeg-Bosnia's abolition, and Bosnian Muslims say the Croats' non-compliance threatens to destroy the Muslim-Croat federation, designed as a cornerstone of the peace deal.

The European Union, which has administered Mostar since 1994, intends to pull out next Sunday unless the Bosnian Croats agree to join the city council. But EU officials and mediators such as Michael Steiner, the deputy international High Representative for Bosnia, doubt that the Bosnian Croats will budge unless prodded by Mr Tudjman.

French heroes from wrong side of tracks

MARY DEJEVSKY
Paris

With a national record of 32 Olympic medals to their name – so far – you would have thought that the French would be dancing around the Arc de Triomphe, or at least cracking open a bottle or two of champagne in the Bois de Boulogne.

With a population almost identical to that of Britain, France has won more than three times as many medals, 12 of them gold, and lies third in the medal table.

At yesterday's cabinet meeting, President Chirac joked that he was awarding the sports minister, Guy Drut, himself a former Olympic champion, a metaphorical gold medal in recognition of the French team's success at Atlanta. The congratulations from on high are lavish. Mr Chirac sent a long message to Marie-Jo Pérec when she retained her 400m championship, applauding the example she had set to young athletes and quoting from a poet of her native Guadeloupe. The Prime Minister, Alain Juppé, appended a handwritten note to his message, saying: "Well done! I embrace you."

The media, in amazed ecstasy at the French performance, are promoting the idea that the medal-winners represent the "better face" of French youth. Much has been made of the fact that many of the medal-winners, especially in the early events like fencing and judo, were hitherto

to "unknowns" from immigrant families, from modest backgrounds, or from the further reaches of the French empire. "Where did all these stars come from?" asked the pro-government daily *Figaro* in surprise, before drawing an optimistic lesson for social and racial integration.

The victory of Djamel Bouras in the judo was hailed as the first time a *bear*, a non-white Frenchman of north African origin, had won an Olympic gold. His call home, and his sofa in their council house were held up as proof that France's housing estates – portrayed last year as the cesspits of the nation, seething with ethnic unrest – were not such a failure after all.

Two other gold medallists, a woman judo winner and a cyclist, with previous Olympic disappointments to their name, were treated as paragons of the wholesome, country life. The message was that the real heart and soul of the country is to be found in the much-ridiculed "France profonde".

For the French government, the nation's success in Atlanta has only one downside: a nagging worry about how much it could cost. Olympic victors receive generous rewards from the government, up to 250,000 francs – more than £30,000 – for a gold medal.

Otherwise, the nation's success at Atlanta should be a godsend. The President and the Prime Minister have spent the

best part of a year blaming a nebulous "feel-bad" factor for the economy's failure to grow, and for the persistence of high unemployment. What better tonic for the national psyche than a tally of Olympic medals?

Unfortunately, little of this seems to be filtering through. France is on holiday. And when the French go on holiday they have better things to do than watch television – which includes doing the walking, cycling, white-water kayaking, riding etc, themselves.

But even if the French were not – physically and psychologically – on holiday, the "feel-good" benefits of the Olympics might still be less than the government would hope. "Can Olympic medals really be any sort of consolation," wrote a reader from Aix-en-Provence in a letter to a national newspaper, "to a country that is in such a parlous state?" And he drew a surprising analogy with Grand Prix racing.

Which would you rather be, he asked: Volkswagen, the market leader, that has never taken part; Renault, which has won all the championships but is now withdrawing from a promising market, or Ferrari, the legendary champion fallen on hard times? "I would prefer French society to be more like Volkswagen than Renault," he said, unpatriotically.

A good many more than 32 Olympic medals will be needed to lift this particular Frenchman out of his gloom.



Returning heroes: Djamel Bouras (left) whose first-time victory – a gold in the judo – has brought optimism to France over its 'cesspit' council estates, and Marie-Jo Pérec (right), who retained her 400-metre gold



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Indonesia: The armed forces crack down on dissidents and lay blame for the weekend's unrest on a threat to the New Order

Generals fear 'latent danger' of communism

RICHARD LLOYD PARRY
Jakarta

"The action taken by the People's Democratic Party is very clear," said Lt-Gen Syarwan Hamid. "They want to overthrow the existing government and form their own new government. History can be repeated. It happened in 1945 and it happened in 1965. But Indonesians born after that time do not realise the danger of communism, what we call the latent danger."

The spectre of communist insurgency in south-east Asia, an increasingly remote threat over the last few years is alive and well in the minds of Indonesia's generals. Four days after pro-democracy demonstrators rioted and burned buildings in Jakarta, the Indonesian armed forces (Abri) yesterday blamed the disturbances on revolutionaries of the "old order" who want to overthrow the New Order. Soldiers on the street have been ordered to shoot troublemakers on sight, and at least three activists have been arrested or called in for questioning, in what appears to be a general crackdown on peaceful dissidents.

To diplomats and non-governmental observers events had until recently seemed fairly straightforward. An increasing number of Indonesians are tireless of the authoritarian 30-year regime of President Suharto. The infatuation came into focus last month when Megawati Sukarnoputri, the popular leader of the Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI), one of just two opposition parties tolerated by the government, was summarily ousted in favour of a more compliant candidate. Supporters of Mrs Megawati occupied the PDI headquarters and when they were violently evicted last Saturday morning, popular anger overflowed in riots which left at least four dead, hundreds injured or arrested, and a dozen buildings in central Jakarta

presenting a bizarre diagram illustrating links between the PRD, Mrs Megawati's PDI, and foreign organisations including Amnesty International and the Australian Labor Party. It also named several individual activists, and Amnesty later issued a statement expressing "serious concern that all these activists are at risk of arrest or intimidation".

Accusations of communist sympathies are a serious business in Indonesia. After an alleged left-wing coup attempt in 1965, some half a million people died in anti-communist pogroms, and the maximum penalty for "subversion" is death. In the eyes of the military at least, the taint of communism transcends the generations: top of the government's current wanted list is Budiman Sudjatmiko, the chairman of the PRD; among the complaints against him, Lt-Gen Hamid cited the fact that his father was an active member of the communist party.

The PRD was founded this month, and its platform, so far as it has developed one, appears mild. At a rare news conference yesterday, Lt-Gen Hamid, Abri's chief of socio-political affairs, read extracts from a document allegedly published by the PRD. It speaks of social democracy and of establishing several political parties that "actively involve and lead mass movements to achieve democratic society in Indonesia".

"We want change, and we want protest," said Lt-Gen Hamid. "But these aims do not agree with the values we follow in Indonesia. This organisation is similar to the former communist party, part of the old order which wants to overthrow the New Order."

"It's the classic tactic – conjure up this communist threat, and use it as an excuse for a crackdown," said one diplomat who was present at the press conference. "That document they produced was cooked up by the military: they forged them here, on the premises."

On Tuesday Lt-Gen Hamid appeared on national television



Policemen standing guard outside the PDI headquarters, raided last weekend. Three died and 54 were injured in the riots that followed

Photograph: Enny Nuraheni/Reuters

Union leader under arrest

Richard Lloyd Parry speaks to a human rights activist in custody

Jakarta — "This is Muchtar here," said the voice on the telephone at 12.40am. "I won't be able to keep our arrangement tomorrow. Not long after you left my house, some men came round and arrested me. They brought me to the Attorney General's office ... I don't know why I have been arrested: they won't tell me yet."

Four hours earlier, I had been sitting in Muchtar Pakpahan's house in a Jakarta suburb, making plans for interviews. As Indonesia's leading independent trade union leader, Mr Pakpahan has contacts with many of the country's proliferating human rights groups and non-governmental organisations.

Yesterday, he was to have introduced me to several people who claim to have first-hand knowledge of what so far is just a persistent rumour: that, during their raid on the Democratic Party's offices last Saturday, the Indonesian armed forces killed unarmed demonstrators.

Why was Mr Pakpahan arrested? The warrant issued by the Attorney General's office says that he is being questioned about the subversive activities of Budiman Sudjatmiko, leader of the People's Democratic Party (PRD), which is accused

by the armed forces of plotting the overthrow of the government. Mr Pakpahan himself has faced similar charges: last October, the army's chief of general staff named him, along with two other Indonesian intellectuals, as a communist in Pancasila [the Indonesian "national philosophy"] and the 1945 Constitution.

"I'm a nationalist and I believe in Pancasila [the Indonesian "national philosophy"] and the 1945 Constitution," he said on Tuesday night. "I am not a communist. I love my country, but I believe in change."

Mr Pakpahan has been incarcerated before. Last year he served five months in prison for allegedly inciting a riot in the city of Medan in 1994 – a charge he has always denied. In the current atmosphere in Jakarta, where mere disagreement with the ruling regime is being painted as subversion, he is an obvious target.

Jakarta is thick with paranoia and conspiracy theories, and it is still unclear whether Mr Pakpahan's arrest is just the start of a more general crackdown.

"This has been going on so long that I don't care any more what happens to me," he said, when I asked him if he feared for his future. "But there are other people involved, and I have to care about them."

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Sportsmen give us a good run for our money

Why all the hand wringing? Suddenly half the nation seems to be convinced first that the Olympics is boring and, second, that Britain is in terminal, lamentable sporting decline. Commentators are muttering that the Games have been uninspiring this year. And everyone else is moaning about our paltry medal performance. John Major has proposed a new Sports Academy to solve the problem. Meanwhile, Tony Blair has called for an urgent review to improve our future Olympic performance.

Yet both complaints are nonsense. The Games are as great as ever, and British sporting prowess is as respectable as ever. If we want to be brilliant, rather than just respectable, we should shove our hands in our pockets for the extra cash to match other countries' sports investment. But if the public (understandably) can find better things to do with its money, we should all stop whingeing and just enjoy the Games instead.

So Linford didn't get his gold in the 100m. So Sally dropped out of the hurdles. So we didn't see a single British face on the judo podium this year. So what? The Olympic Games are a brilliant spectacle, regardless of the fate of our British competitors.

Consider the incredible twists and tumbles of the gymnasts. Korbut and Comaneci, eat your heart out. Today's

gymnasts leap higher and spin faster than yesterday's heroes ever did. Think of the drama and brute strength of the weight-lifting. The Russian Andrei Chernenko won the gold medal by lifting an astonishing, record-breaking 260kg. Carl Lewis leapt 8.5m to win his ninth Olympic gold medal. And Charles Austin defied gravity, soaring over 2.39m in the high jump.

If we are disappointed with the Games, it can only be because we set too much store by the performance of a few athletes swathed in the Union Jack. We would presumably have condemned Euro '96 as a boring waste of time and money had England been knocked out in the first round.

But we shouldn't get so depressed about British sport. With our medal tally just staggering into double figures, we have admittedly performed worse than in previous years. But we shouldn't overreact. Some of our best performers this year were carrying injuries; Gunnell, Holmes, Jackson, Obree. It's a shame, but it happens.

You can't judge the state of British sport on the basis of one Olympics. Our worst performance this century took place in St Louis in the US in 1904. We won no gold medals at all, and only one silver, and one bronze. Pathetic huh? Yet only four years later in London, we won a spectacular 56 gold medals, 50 silver and 39 bronze. It was our best performance of the century (although



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it did set the world complaining about the bias of British judges).

Half a century on, in Helsinki 1952 – the performance that Atlanta has been compared to – Britain won only one gold medal, and only 11 medals in total. Yet four years later in Melbourne we picked up six gold medals – something we haven't managed to duplicate since then.

So, it is perfectly possible for the British team to exhibit widely different performances from one Olympics to the next, as generations of athletes emerge and then age. The difference between our Atlanta performance and

our success during the Eighties is rather small in comparison.

Of course we could do better. We could aspire to more than the five golds we picked up in Moscow, Los Angeles, Seoul and Barcelona. Australia has a population less than half the size of Britain's, yet it won nine gold medals in 1992, and looks set to do as well in Atlanta. But we will need money, not hand wringing, to emulate their success.

Supporting Olympic athletes is an expensive business. They need money to live on while they train full-time, specialist coaches, expert medical support, and proper facilities. Paul Palmer, one

of Britain's few silver medallists this year, still relies on his parents for his keep. Young sports men and women have trouble making ends meet.

The Australians established centres of sporting excellence – top-class academies – to support their sports women and men. They have been raking in the medallions ever since. The French have invested heavily in sport – and they have 13 gold medals to show for it.

If the politicians really think it's important for Britain to do much better in the Olympics, they could follow a similar route here. Alternatively, they could shut up and leave well alone. We get the sports we want and pay for. For example, football has plenty of money to train its youngsters and transfer its stars because the public are prepared to pay to watch it, either in the stadium or in their sitting rooms.

In the US, popular support for track events has generated sporting scholarships at private universities and colleges across the country. Even here, established stars of athletics such as Christie and Gunnell can pick up plenty of cash in appearance fees and sponsorship so they can pay for their own top-class training. But the sports that struggle for funds are those which attract little attention in Britain outside the Olympic weeks; they can't raise much money from sponsorship, spectators or television deals. If the public don't have the enthusiasm to support these athletes

directly, it isn't clear that they should get much taxpayers' money either.

New money for elite sports will have to come from somewhere; perhaps from higher taxes, cuts in sports facilities for the public, or lottery money that could have been spent on charities. These are serious sacrifices for the sake of two weeks of feeling good about ourselves every four years. Might we be happier enjoying our occasional Olympic successes, and spending our own money on sport for all instead?

No cure for the seven-year itch

It's official. Testosterone patches won't cure a male mid-life crisis. Oestrogen patches – also known as HRT – help many women sail through and past the menopause unencumbered by the mood swings, exhaustion and ill-health that lack of oestrogen can cause.

It isn't so simple for middle-aged men. Lack of testosterone is no excuse for those who leave their families for young bimbos, panic about their career failures and wallow in morbid self-pity. Many abandoned wives never believed it for a moment. Their absconding husbands, as they have always known, are suffering (if that is the word) from too much testosterone, not too little.

No clear case for a single currency

Sir: Gwyn Davies's excellent piece on EMU ("What would life have been like inside EMU?", 29 July) deserves a careful and detailed response. He mentions the outlier that his exercise is subject to many caveats but does not return to them at the end.

In my view there is no clear case either way that tells us whether to join a single currency or not. There are factors on both sides to which one can attach probabilities and come out whichever way one chooses but the exercise is fraught with many judgements. In Mr Davies's case the calculations that he makes are backward looking but they are also partial. Thus while he is correct that if everything else had remained the same and a Waigel-type fine had been in operation the UK could have paid as much as £30bn by the same token the effect of lower interest rates on debt servicing and indeed on lower debt, as interest costs are reduced, needs to be set alongside the £30bn.

A lower interest rate of about 3 to 4 per cent on a debt of say, around £200bn as of 1988 for about four years is not to be sniffed at. So if he has to quantify one he has to do the other as well.

The single currency issue is bevelled because each side states its own case. The need is to list the advantages and disadvantages of both options clearly setting out the issues over which we can differ both in terms of likely impact and the probability of the impact occurring and then study the range of answers with probability attached before a conclusion can be arrived at. This would be a rational way of proceeding.

Thus we can balance the gains from lower interest rates along with the likelihood that the Euro will be a strong currency and interest rates will indeed be lower, as against the costs of giving up the interest rate weapon and meeting the costs of higher regional unemployment with inadequate transfer payments. We can balance the freedom to set our own interest rates and exchange rates outside with the likelihood that as in the past devaluation will only yield temporary gains and interest rates will rise further, especially on long-dated debt due to the UK's reputation for fiscal profligacy.

Is it too much to hope that even now there is time to set up a group, non-political but expert, say in the Institute of Fiscal Studies to get some sense on this question?

Professor The Lord MEGHNAD DESAI
House of Lords
London SW1

Sir: Andreas Whittam Smith disagrees with the conclusion of my book *In With the Euro, Out With the Pound* ("We would soon report a hasty union", 29 July). Since EMU began with the ERM in 1979, and the Euro is due to come in 1999, 20 years can hardly be called "hasty".

Mr Whittam Smith uses the metaphor of a car with two drivers to condemn the separation of monetary and fiscal policy. Yet this is what we have now with the duo of Chancellor of the Exchequer running fiscal policy and Governor of the Bank of England having a say in monetary policy. Were the Bank of England to be completely independent, as even some Eurosceptics want, the separation would be complete. Yet this is widely acknowledged to be the best



way to keep inflation down and economic growth up. A European Central Bank is likely to be more independent, and to run a better monetary policy, than any national central bank.

Gwyn Davies (29 July) argues that had we been in EMU in 1989, the recession would have been dampened; but then, he says, the inability to devalue would "have greatly prolonged the recession, and slowed the recovery". The experience of France suggests that economic growth would have been more stable, and slightly higher on average over the first six years of the 1990s.

Stable growth is better than volatile growth even if the two average the same. Mr Davies also claims that today base rates would be 3.5 to 4 per cent (I agree), "and the consumer would not doubt be embarking on a vibrant boom". A government seeking re-election should surely be seeking to opt in to the Euro as soon as possible.

CHRISTOPHER JOHNSON
London N6

Turkey needs to be more open

Sir: Taking a swipe at politicians is a favourite occupation of a certain type of journalist. Instead, Tony Barber should take a look at the information about Turkey which comes from non-politicians. The US State Department, the UN Rapporteur on Torture, the UN Rapporteur on Extrajudicial Executions, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch/Helsinki, the Writers in Prison Committee of International

PEN, the Turkish Human Rights Association, and Article XIX present the kind of picture Mr Barber ascribes to the "politicians".

Turkey has the longest entry of any country in the six-monthly case list of the Writers in Prison Committee, and the longest entry in the report of the UN Rapporteur on Torture.

The Rapporteur on Extrajudicial Executions, M. Bacrau Waly Ndiaye, an African jurist, reports that he "continues to be extremely concerned about violations of the right to life in the south-eastern provinces of Turkey". He complains that no progress has been made since 1992 on his request for an invitation to visit.

If Mr Barber wants Europe to treat Turkey as a friend and equal partner, he should persuade the Turks to adopt a policy of greater transparency. If they have nothing to hide, not only could they invite M. Ndiaye, but also they could lift the ban on Amnesty International and myself entering the country. They could invite the International Red Cross to provide humanitarian services under the Geneva Conventions in the conflict in the south-east, as they have been offering to do for 12 years, and they could invite the OSCE to help solve the conflict, as they are doing everywhere else in the region.

Lord AVEBURY
Chairman, Parliamentary Human Rights Group
House of Lords
London SW1

Bacteria and the beginning of life

Sir: Charles Arthur's article, "A comet full of soup" (29 July), refers to ideas that we ourselves have expounded over many years. The article gives the impression that Mayo Greenberg was the first to suggest that life arose through the introduction of organic material from comets, rather than in a pure earthbound "primordial soup", whereas one of us already considered an extension of the primordial soup to include the entire solar nebula in *Frontiers of Astronomy* in 1955, long before Professor Greenberg had expressed any opinions on this matter. The evolution of our own ideas on these matters is traced in our most recent book *Our Place in the Cosmos* (Orion, 1996).

Recent developments in astronomy have shown that light absorption properties of cosmic dust are strikingly similar to those of bacteria and spores – as indeed we have argued for nearly two decades. The organic matter in space resembles the stuff of life, and the problem then is to understand how such material is produced. The choice is whether the material is generated biologically, by means of biological replication in suitable sites such as comets, or whether it is produced non-biologically in a way that somehow mimics the living process. We have always thought that the biological option is preferable to invoking a process which is essentially untestable.

Professor Greenberg is quoted as saying that we are mistaken in considering this particular option because "Bacteria couldn't survive in space. Ultraviolet would destroy them... the idea of interstellar 'spores' is... nonsensical". Such strongly emotive words surely cannot be justified. Bacterial spores in space are most easily protected from UV radiation because they would inevitably acquire thin coatings of protective carbonaceous material (uman ionton).

The humbling lesson of microbiology over the past decade has been to show how exceedingly sturdy bacterial cells really are, and how they can survive under the most extreme conditions imaginable. Some species of *micrococcus radiodurans* are known to survive radiation doses equivalent to what would occur in interstellar clouds over millions of years, and of course bacteria in the interiors of comets could survive for indefinite lengths of time.

Our original ideas as described in *Lifecloud* (1978) relating to the need to import life molecules from space is now adopted pretty well without dissent. But the more powerful and radical concept of life coming in the form of fully fledged bacteria is resisted for reasons that are more to do with sociology than science. Professor Greenberg and other scientists in the field who are clamouring for priority over the weaker of the two options that we discussed in *Lifecloud* are lagging nearly two decades behind.

On a positive note, I am glad that the Human Fertilisation & Embryology Authority plan to ban payment to donors. I hope it stems from the realisation that the embryos are not commodities.

Professor Sir FRED HOYLE
Professor N C WICKRAMASINGHE
Cardiff

Embryos are not commodities

Sir: I read with interest your leading article, "Frozen embryos: the race for a new ethical code" (24 July). I would suggest that an embryo is not "a couple's potential for children" but a child with potential.

Every one of us began life as a single cell newly created when sperm fertilised egg at conception. At this point, a unique individual has inherited characteristics from both parents. Their genes have already determined the baby's hair colour, eye colour, height and so on, and its sex. If this isn't the start of human life, what is?

It is not only Roman Catholics who believe in the sanctity of life. The plight of the "abandoned" embryos is a clear violation of the 1948 Declaration of Geneva: "I will have the utmost respect for human life from the time of conception..."

I was pleased that you mentioned that very few implantations of frozen embryos are successful. Eighty per cent of couples who enter IVF programmes end with no child. What effect must this have on the couples for whom treatment proves unsuccessful? I would suggest that the reason the parents of so many embryos have "abandoned" them is because of the emotional trauma they must have suffered.

On a positive note, I am glad that the Human Fertilisation & Embryology Authority plan to ban payment to donors. I hope it stems from the realisation that the embryos are not commodities. Mrs KAREN A FOWLES York

The joke is on the English

Sir: "I had no idea" says Miles Kington, "that there was such a thing as a Welsh Academy" ("One way to unite the Welsh: insult them", 30 July), and it seems that he is just as ignorant about the condition of Welsh culture.

He would be ashamed, I think, to write so scornfully about any other country whose language he does not understand, and of whose intellectual activities he is evidently ignorant; but there we are, the English now feeling themselves to be inferior to every other people in Europe, they are left only with the Welsh and the Scots to sneer at – preferably the Welsh, because there are fewer of them, and they have a language of their own.

Mr Kington and his kind should stop and think for every Englishman making cruel jokes about Wales, there are 10,000 foreigners laughing at England.

Ms IAN MORRIS
Member
Yr Academi Gymreig
Llanystumdwy, Gwynedd

Giving a lift to car sharing

Sir: The RAC would be delighted to see more car sharing on non-tube-strike days (Letters, 31 July), however, our research shows there is a problem with the "Not in my front seat" syndrome. Our surveys suggest that car sharing is a good idea for everybody else but when it comes down to it the NIMFS mentality wins the day.

For car sharing to work on a wider scale we need more incentives such as "high occupancy vehicle" lanes, preferential office parking for car sharers and a change of attitude. When I walk to work on the next strike day with a sign for "Trafalgar Square" hopefully some drivers will overcome the NIMFS syndrome and give me a lift.

EDMUND KING
Head of Campaigns
RAC
London SW1

Life, liberty and happiness

Sir: The phrase "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" is not to be found in the US Constitution of 1787 as you maintain (leading article, "Why the Government should give us all a break", 31 July). Rather, it is in the Declaration of Independence from the British Crown, penned by Thomas Jefferson 11 years earlier.

STEVEN HENNING SIEVERTS
London NW6

Non-U not known
Sir: It is misleading to credit Nancy Mitford with the "invention of U and Non-U language" (Obituaries, 25 July) on two counts. No one person invents a language and in this instance the dichotomy was admirably by Professor A S C Ross in a 35-page article in the Finnish scholarly journal *Neophilologische Mitteilungen* in 1954.

It was Ross who coined the terms U and Non-U, but they failed to gain a firm foothold in the language and are scarcely known to students of English today.
JOHN ATKINSON
Stepness,
Lincolnshire

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(Fax: 0171-293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk) Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

مكالما من الأصل

analysis

Burying the Crusader's sword

Nine hundred years after a Pope denounced Muslims as a 'vile race', a leading Western newspaper talks of an 'Islamist gangrene'. The language of hatred is frightening European leaders and hindering peace, says Robert Fisk

A few months ago, the telephone rang in my Beirut apartment and a shy, academic voice asked if he could present me with a document. Dr Georges Jabbour turned out to be a Syrian who worked in the office of his prime minister but whose personal mission had nothing to do with his government. The document he gave me was addressed to Pope John Paul II and it asked, with great courtesy and without resentment, if - on the 900th anniversary of Pope Urban II's appeal for a holy war against Muslims - His Holiness would like to apologise for the Crusades.

The 900 years of blood and fire that Europe was to unleash on the Middle East - in which both Muslims and Jews were massacred by the Crusaders, some of whom indulged in cannibalism - had been preceded by Pope Urban's chilling condemnation of Muslims as "an accursed race, a race utterly alienated from God". It was a holy act, he said, to "exterminate this vile race from our [sic] lands".

Dr Jabbour's letter 900 years later hopefully predicted that an apology from the modern-day Pope would "assuage and bring peace to the Islamic world as a whole".

I was reminded of my unexpected Syrian visitor this week by something familiar in the rhetoric that the West is now using against its real or supposed enemies in the Middle East - and by the very real danger that this language represents for Europe. "Islamic terror" is now a password for anger and hatred on American television and in the American

and Israeli press, an insidious punctuation mark that pays no attention to religion or history, and often little attention to proof. At Sharm el-Sheikh and again this week, President Clinton - supported by world leaders - appears to have launched a modern-day Crusade that goes far beyond the outrage that any sane person must feel towards the acts of criminal violence now afflicting the United States.

Of course, when suicide bombers or gunmen - in Israel or in the West - boast that they murder civilians in the name of Islam, it is understandable that many millions of Israelis and Westerners will believe that

And what of the so-called "security expert" who announced that "hundreds of Iranian-directed Muslim maniacs are emerging from the Middle East woodwork ... slobbering over the promised virgins waiting them in paradise". This "expert" was quoted, in all seriousness, in an article on the TWA disaster in last Thursday's *Jerusalem Post* by Dennis Eisenberg and Uri Dan, both of whom stated as fact that the Iranians had set off a bomb on the airliner.

The language of hatred - of

"terror" and of "slobbering" maniacs - cannot be dismissed as journalists. Imagine, for instance, the disgust we would feel - rightly - if the massacre of 29 Palestinians by an Israeli settler in Hebron had been followed by an article in *Le Monde* entitled "Jewish gangrene"; in fact, Baruch Goldstein's bloodbath was never even called an act of "terror" - because that is not quite the "terror" against which Americans and Europeans are being asked to campaign.

Violent language, however, is becoming endemic throughout the West and there are signs that it is beginning to frighten some European governments. At least one European foreign minister has felt obliged to warn his colleagues that injustice rather than "fanaticism" breeds "terrorism" and that name-calling deliberately serves to hide the nature of that injustice. For as the American-Israeli "peace process" finally crumbles to dust in the aftermath of the Likud election victory, the last thing Europe needs now is to pursue an American-Israeli crusade against something called "Islamic terror" - and for one simple, overriding reason. America has identified national interests in the Middle East. Cynics might sum them up as Israel and oil, though not necessarily in that order. Europe also has interests but we have something infinitely more important. The nations of the Middle East are our neighbours.

"Islamic terror" is their enemy. That is what the bombers want them to believe. Oddly enough, the Serbs who massacred and raped their way through the Muslims of Bosnia were never described as servants of "Christianity" - and that is another story. Nevertheless, the association of religion and violence has now reached racist proportions, not just in America but in Israel and in Europe. Who would have believed, for example, that a respected European newspaper would carry a cartoon of a Muslim cleric portrayed as an octopus with tentacles spreading from his robes opposite an article headlined "Islamist gangrene"? But that is exactly what *Le Monde* did on 6 March: the cartoon was by Ronald Searle, the article by Marcel Goldstein, vice-president of the Representative Council of Jewish Institutions in France.



The Crusader as Christian hero: a popular 19th century Spanish print. The nations of the Middle East will always be our neighbours: should Europeans pursue an American-Israeli crusade against something called the 'Islamic terror'? Photograph: Mary Evans Picture Library

The association of religion and violence has now reached racist proportions

It is this realisation that lies at the heart of a slow but growing European re-engagement in the Middle East, one that is not opposed to America but which may well infuriate Americans and some - though not all - Israelis. The process was marked by last year's European refusal to join President Clinton's embargo against Iran, an embargo which he announced at a Jewish meeting in New York, but which was immediately rejected by the European powers whose policy of "dialogue" rather than confrontation has now become de facto EU policy. A similar practice - which in no way expresses approval of the dictatorships involved - applies to Syria, against whom some American commentators are now advising pre-emptive military strikes (by Israel, of course, rather than by the United States).

They will never be neighbours of America. They will always be neighbours of ours.

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Last April, although initially criticised by EU officials, the French foreign minister, Hervé de Charette, flew to the Middle East during Israel's bombardment of southern Lebanon, expressing to Israel the anger of President Chirac - who had just paid a state visit to Lebanon - and eventually playing a leading role in a ceasefire between the

Israelis and the Hezbollah. It was De Charette who personally visited the scene of Israel's massacre at Qana. And as a reward for its later peacemaking, France is now to sit on the - admittedly rather impotent - five-power ceasefire committee. And then in early July, Germany - whose "dialogue" with Iran has proved the closest and most economically advantageous of all European states - was able to mediate between the Iranians, Syrians and Israelis to secure the exchange of bodies and prisoners of both sides in the south Lebanon war.

There are other signs of European impatience with America's policy in the Middle East; its growing awareness that America's uncritical support for Israel is alienating ever more millions of Arabs has led to pointed remarks from both Britain and France for the need to follow signed peace agreements between the Palestinians and Israel. France has now objected to America's campaign to prevent Boutros Boutros Ghali - an Egyptian Christian - seeking UN re-election. And it should not be forgotten that it was Europe which accepted long before the Americans and Israelis that the PLO should be involved in peace negotiations. At a time when President Jimmy Carter

was forced to rid himself of a UN ambassador who had privately met with a PLO adviser, British and other European ambassadors around the Middle East were meeting publicly with Yasir Arafat's senior officials. Indeed, the 1980 Vienna declaration specifically stated that the PLO - still "internationally recognised" - should be allowed to participate in the peace process.

In many parts of the Middle East Europe is still seen as an enlightened community

international terrorists", according to Israel and America - should be "associated" with peace negotiations. When European foreign ministers met in Paris just under four years later, they reiterated the terms of the Venice agreement, adding their support to what they called the "right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, with all that this implies." In Brussels in 1987, Community foreign ministers were demanding an improvement of living conditions for Palestinians in occupied territory. In the same year, EC declarations in Copenhagen and Bonn supported George Schulz's peace initiatives but deplored what they referred to as Israel's "repressive measures ... which are in violation of international law and human rights". Most important of all, the EU has remained steadfast in its belief that UN Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 - the end of Israeli occupation in return for the security of all Middle East states, the very formula now rejected by the Israelis - must remain the unalterable bedrock of peace in the region.

But there is another element of US foreign policy in the Middle East that can also prove pernicious to its allies, not only to those nations such as Egypt which are now locked into a straitjacket of loyalty on pain of losing the massive US subsidies that save it from bankruptcy, but to Israel itself.

Ever since the foundation of the state, Israelis have been concerned - and rightly so - at the extent of their own dependency on the United States. Israeli politicians of left and right have noted the degree to which Israel must rely upon the US not just for its military and political protection but for its financial solvency. And many Israelis suspect that this rela-

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Stagecoach in £475m rail takeover

Porterbrook rolling stock purchase raises fears of threat to competition

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR
and MICHAEL HARRISON

A handful of rail executives were turned into multi-millionaires yesterday as Stagecoach, the aggressive bus and rail group, unveiled a £475m takeover of the rolling stock leasing company Porterbrook.

But the deal provoked immediate criticism and a full-

The consolidation of the bus industry into three large groupings continued yesterday with the acquisition of North East Bus by the Cowie Group. The three groups - Cowie, Stagecoach and FirstBus - now have a 55 per cent share of the UK bus market.

Cowie, the car sales and finance group, based in Sunderland, paid £24.5m to National Express group for the bus company. North East Bus has annual sales of almost £29m and runs services in County Durham and Teesside in Northeast England, where Cowie already owns Northumbria Buses and Yorkshire Bus. North East Bus made a profit of £3m last year and owns 422 buses and has nearly 1,200 employees.

scale regulatory investigation was launched. If the deal is allowed through it would fundamentally change the structure of the privatised railway industry. Porterbrook was bought off the Government in January by a management-led buyout for £57m. The effective price paid yesterday by Stagecoach, including debt, is £825m.

The 20 per cent stake held by the management of Porterbrook, led by managing director Sandy Anderson, is worth £92.5m on the basis of the Stagecoach bid. At the time of privatisation

just seven months ago it was valued at £15m although the Porterbrook chief and the remaining 49 staff are thought to have paid only a fraction of that amount for their shares.

Stagecoach, which already owns the South West Trains franchise and is bidding for the 12 remaining passenger franchises being auctioned off immediately offered undertakings to safeguard competition in a bid to prevent the deal being referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

It also said it would be placing an order for 900 new rolling stock for South West Trains. Previously, the company had said that no new trains were needed for the seven year term of the franchise which started last February.

The carefully constructed edifice of rail privatisation developed over the past three years by the Government has been put in jeopardy by the proposed deal. Labour's new shadow transport secretary, Andrew Smith, immediately raised questions about the merger. He said: "It is a matter of concern that Stagecoach is now in a position from which it might be able to inhibit competitors. Any potential bidders for the remaining franchises will need to look carefully at the implications of this deal where rail companies will be forced to lease rolling stock from their competitors."

The move by Stagecoach towards vertical integration poses a series of questions for the rail regulator. John Swift, and the Office of Fair Trading to consider. Mr Swift issued a 22 paragraph consultation paper on the proposed deal, giving respondents three weeks to send in their views. He has asked, in particular, for views on the

effect of the merger on investment in new rolling stock and on competition in the market for rolling stock and in the provision of passenger services. He will report to the Office of Fair Trading which, in turn, will advise the DfT. Mr Swift's position is complicated by the limits of his power. While contracts between Railtrack and

the train operating companies, the rolling stock companies such as Porterbrook are exempt from his scrutiny.

The ramifications for the rail industry are very uncertain and are worrying many of the private companies which have entered the market since privatisation began in earnest a year ago. The inter-relationship between the different players in the rail industry are already complex and if one company is vertically integrated, others fear it will be in a position to outbid rivals in the franchising process.

Aware of these fears, Stagecoach's statement yesterday said that the terms offered by Porterbrook to any train operating company "will not unfairly discriminate" compared with companies controlled by Stagecoach.

However, such promises met with derision among some of the other players in the rail industry. One senior source said: "If anyone thinks that Porterbrook will be offering the same deal to other bidders for train companies as they will to Stagecoach, they are living in cloud cuckoo land. There isn't the faintest chance of that happening. This is a red-tooth-and-claw environment."

While Stagecoach wins the first franchise, South West Trains, it has been in the bidding for all eight so far allocated and has promised to bid for all the remainder of the 25.

Comment, page 19

Full steam ahead: Brian Souter, chairman of Stagecoach, may, however, be required to slam on the brakes concerning further rolling stock acquisition

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Comment, page 19

Telewest shake-up prompts chief executive's departure

MATHEW HORSMAN
Media Editor



Alan Michels: Could pocket £1m in lieu of notice

The chief executive of the country's largest cable company is to leave with immediate effect, it emerged last night, in the wake of the latest management shake-up in the struggling UK cable sector.

The departure of Alan Michels, head of Telewest Communications, follows a board meeting yesterday to discuss management restructuring and future strategy. Mr Michels, who could pocket £1m of com-

pensation, is expected to be replaced by Stephen Davidson, currently finance director, who would become the first British executive to head up one of the top UK cable operators. Mr Davidson, a banker by training, has worked with large media clients, and was senior vice-president, corporate finance, at Lorimar, now a subsidiary of Time Warner.

The change marks the third time this year a large cable company has changed chief executives. Most recently, Dan Sowers took over from Alan

Bates at Bell Cablemedia, the third largest operator.

Industry sources said the changes reflected a desire to replace largely technical management with executives more attuned to marketing, in an effort to boost disappointingly low penetration rates, particularly for cable television.

Mr Michels, who joined Telewest from one of its parent companies, US West, in 1994, spent most of his career in financial analysis. Under his direction, the cable operator saw

telephony penetration rates im-

prove, although the cable television side performed far less well. He is to spend some time with his family, following his return to the US.

"I hope this means the end of a steady stream of Americans coming in to run cable companies for two-year stints," one Telewest insider said.

Another senior industry source added: "The company has been a bit of a shambles from a customer point of view."

But Mr Michels received support from some colleagues. One said: "He has worked bloody

hard in a very difficult industry."

Mr Michels was on a three-year fixed contract worth £500,000 a year. He is expected to be paid £1m in lieu of a two-year notice period. His remuneration had included an amount to cover tax liabilities as well as a housing allowance worth £63,000 a year.

One industry observer predicted last night that the restructuring could mark a turning point for the cable industry, which has been unable to find television programming to attract customers and drive sub-

scriptions. Telewest and the second-largest operator, Nynex CableComms, effectively dropped plans to develop cable-exclusive programming, and signed long-term supply agreements with BSkyB, Rupert Murdoch's satellite broadcaster.

The cable industry is just over halfway through a £1.6bn plan to link UK homes to cable for television and telephone services. The sector has been given a rough ride by the City, which has been impotent over slow growth of the subscriber base.

Comment, page 19

Salvesen open to higher offer

NIGEL COPE

Christian Salvesen rejected the proposed £1bn offer from Hays, the rival transport group, yesterday describing it as "inadequate", though it left the door open for a "significantly" improved approach.

At a crunch board meeting in London, which included two members of the controlling Salvesen family, the directors voted unanimously to reject

the 370p-a-share offer following advice from their advisers, SEC Warburg.

In a letter to Hays, Christian Salvesen said: "You have indicated in both your letters that you may be prepared to improve your offer. The board would consider a significantly improved financial proposal should you wish to make one to it."

Salvesen chief executive Chris Masters stressed that the board was "in no way solicit-

ing an offer". He repeated his view that he did not consider the industrial logic of the deal compelling and that it did not reflect the value of the company.

Hays said it was "considering" its position but it seems unlikely that the company would give up after the first attempt. One institutional investor described the 370p offer as "just a sighting shot". Ronnie Frost, chairman of Hays, has not ruled out going hostile but would prefer

to reach an agreed deal as the Salvesen family controls 38 per cent of the shares. Some family members have expressed interest in an improved deal and this may give Hays hope that it can get some of the family on its side.

However, it is unclear how much higher Hays can afford to go. An offer above 400p is considered unlikely. Christian Salvesen shares fell 4p to 356p with Hays unchanged at 429p.

It had won a case establishing that it had the right to receive cash won by names litigating against the market. It also named the trustees for Equitas, the reinsurance vehicle for the rescue and announced plans for new Scottish limited partnerships which will allow names to continue in the market but with limited liability.

Lloyd's case against attempts to overturn its £3.2bn settlement offer had been reviewed by the three QCAs, by solicitors Slaughter and May and by the Department of Trade and Industry and its lawyers and the result had been a "fair old choir of QCAs singing to the same tune", Mr O'Brien said. A spokesman reiterated that no more could be done to change the offer.

The names asked for extra help for those who had paid their debts in full, who do not benefit as much from the £3.2bn rescue as those who refused. A Lloyd's spokesman said the group had "been left in no doubt of the vigour with which any action would be contested".

Mr O'Brien said afterwards: "If they insist, they are entitled to their day in court."

Anticipating a battle, Lloyd's said it had recruited three leading Queen's Counsel who were specialists in judicial review.

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THE INDEPENDENT
section two

Cable firms renew BT dirty tricks row

Cable operators resumed their bitter attack on BT last night, accusing the telecoms giant of continuing a controversial dirty tricks campaign aimed at widening back customers, writes Mathew Horsman.

According to information gathered by the Cable Communications Association, seven fresh complaints of improper

tele-marketing have been received, and these will be sent to Ofcom, the regulator, today or tomorrow.

In addition, several cable operators, including Bell Cablemedia, have unearthed complaints that cable customers were given misinformation by BT tele-marketers, as part of the Win Back campaign.

Julie Chobzynska, a former trainer at BT's Win Back operation in Bristol, said yesterday: "Staff tell customers they would not be able to get a telephone directory service if they remained with cable."

Ofcom cleared BT of any wrong-doing in a report published last month. However, the watchdog said last night it

would look into the new allegations, as part of its investigation into claims by Which? magazine that Win Back staff have routinely misinformed cable customers over comparisons between cable and BT.

A BT spokeswoman said: "We are concerned by further allegations and will investigate."

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COMMENT

In some respects Stagecoach's Brian Souter has got to be admired for exposing the contradictions in the sell-off by seeking to add a rolling stock company to the passenger franchises he already has and hopes still to get.

The rail sell-off comes to a head-on crash

The head-on collision that many predicted would be the inevitable consequence of rail privatisation has occurred even more rapidly than expected. Unsurprisingly, the City is delighted with the latest outing of the Stagecoach Pullman. But its £825m acquisition of the train leasing business Porterbrook has derailed the negotiations and left the Transport Secretary Sir George Young looking like the booking clerk who issued a Super Saver before 9.30 in the morning.

In some respects Stagecoach's Brian Souter has got to be admired for exposing the contradictions in the rail sell-off by seeking to add a rolling stock company to the passenger franchises he already has and hopes still to get.

If rail privatisation was about anything it was about introducing competition. To some people, splitting BR up into 57 different varieties looked barmy but we were reassured that it would expose inefficiencies and force the component parts to deal more competitively with one another. We were also assured that rail privatisation would not be another gravy train for bloated executives.

With one move Mr Souter has driven well, a stagecoach through the Government's best intentions. The vertical integration that would result from the Stagecoach-Porterbrook deal strikes at the heart of the new structure put in place through privatisation. The overnight windfalls that have dropped in the laps of the Porterbrook management

put even the corporate excesses of the regional electricity companies in the shade.

The idea that any of those Porterbrook executives who mortgaged their houses to jump on board are now being rewarded for their risk taking is also fanciful. Inheriting a business where 80 per cent of the revenues are guaranteed for eight years is the kind of risk we would all love to take.

The Office of Passenger Rail Franchising and the rail regulator John Swift are not surprised by building up a fair old head of steam about the way the bidding system for the remaining 12 franchises could be compromised. It is easy to see why if Stagecoach can, on the one hand, set the price for leasing out the rolling stock and on the other determine what it is worth bidding for in subsidies.

Mr Souter has already thought of that and is attempting to avoid being shunted off to the MMC with a series of undertakings. How easily they could be policed is another matter. A more effective safeguard might be to bar Stagecoach from bidding for any more rail franchises.

Cable has got itself in a twist

It is "all change" at the major cable companies, as yet another chief executive, this time Alain Michels of Telewest, gets the chop. What on earth is going on? The quick answer is that cable is in woeful shape: its pen-

etration rates are stuck in the mid 20 per cent range, its range of programming is either dire or bought in from market leader BSkyB, and its marketing and after-sales service record is, in a word, lousy. Some of this must be put down to the leadership or lack of it. In the main, the (mostly) American executives parachuted in to run the cable industry here have been telecoms men, and technical types – better at digging up roads, laying cable and establishing switching networks than at selling CATV and telephone services to a consumer market they barely understand.

The new man at Bell Cablemedia, Dan Somers, puts customers front and centre in his new strategy. Likewise, Stephen Davidson, who is to take over from Mr Michels at Telewest, is a man who talks marketing, even if he, like the man he replaces, is a finance type, not strictly a salesman.

But with a new man at the top, at least Telewest can now get on with the task of making cable profitable in the UK. Once the networks are fully built out, and the information highway begins to develop more quickly in the cable industry ought to benefit, even if heads roll in the meantime.

Troubled times for Euro-Sids

British Sid is not alone. His more sophisticated neighbours who invested in specialised investment trusts buying Euro-

pean privatisation stocks have also done badly, ending up with holdings which nobody wants in a sector which looks to be going nowhere.

The managers of Kepit, Kleinwort Benson's European Privatisation Trust, recognised the game was up a couple of weeks ago, and their £500m fund launched in 1994 was dead in the water, trading at a 13.8 per cent discount to its net asset value. A reconstruction package to try and persuade Kepit's 79,000 shareholders to switch into other more dynamic Kleinwort funds has not proved successful.

But the smell of blood in the water has attracted predators keen to liquidate Kepit, and release the asset value. Yesterday Henry Touche Remnant's European Growth Trust (Treg) offered holders of Kepit shares and warrants a choice between an eventual cash exit which Treg values at 93.86p and 28.16p respectively, or a switch into Treg, which invests in European smaller companies, a sector which is still performing. Treg is valued at only 170m but it trades at or above its asset value.

Kepit shares rose 2p to 91p and Treg shed 3p to 244p, but if the offer succeeds the Kepit portfolio will be liquidated and parceled out. After costs Kepit shareholders can expect cash or Treg shares worth 5.5 per cent and warrant-holders 10.4 per cent above Tuesday's market price. Treg shareholders will get a 2.4 per cent uplift to asset values, as well as lower costs and increased

marketability for their enlarged fund. A clean kill could also trigger more attacks in a sector ripe for rationalisation.

More misery for the property have-nots

All the barometers of the housing market are pointing to an eventual recovery, but yesterday's repossession figures show that unsettled conditions still prevail. Although the first half of this year did not bring the increase that many commentators had feared, there was barely any decline from the second half of last year. About 50,000 families a year are still losing their homes. Between 750,000 and a million home owners have properties worth less than the size of their mortgage.

The start of a recovery in house prices, which is clearly under way, was always expected to allow lenders to repossess more properties as it became worth selling them. So the absence of any clear downward trend in the figures is not a surprise. However, they do emphasise the most serious problem hanging over the housing market. That is the concentration of misery among certain groups of people.

The fact that the housing market recovery is greater for the upper sectors of the market and more prosperous areas is only increasing the divisions between the property market haves and have-nots.

Royal quits high street and cuts 1,300 jobs

PETER RODGERS
Financial Editor

Royal & Sun Alliance, the insurance group, is closing all but five of its 94 high-street branches as part of an efficiency drive that will cost 1,300 jobs. The branches have been made redundant by the shift in the insurance industry towards direct sales by telephone.

The reductions are the first in a programme expected to reduce the UK insurance workforce by 4,000 in the wake of the £5.4bn merger just completed.

John Robins of GRE: Signs of a recovery in premiums

Of the job cuts, 300 will be at the branches – by the end of this year – and 500 will occur in each of the head offices in Liverpool and Horsham, West Sussex, over the next 18 months.

Before their merger, the two companies, Royal Insurance and Sun Alliance, had separately decided that the roles of the branches were "diminishing and becoming uneconomic". But they said that compulsory redundancies would be "kept to a minimum".

Industry sources said that Guardian Royal Exchange, a rival company, is also likely to cut

jobs. In a renewed efficiency programme, another 300 will go from its force of 6,000 UK staff. The company said it was not, however, planning involuntary redundancies.

Meanwhile, GRE expects to spend £500m (£320m) on one – or more likely two – US acquisitions in the next six months, according to John Robins, the chief executive. The company has been in talks with several potential targets.

Mr Robins said: "I hope to have something in the next six months. We have turned down two to three that did not meet our criteria." GRE is looking for a specialist insurer of higher risk drivers to add to its existing subsidiary in the US, and an agency broker in property and casualty insurance. Mr Robins cheered the UK stock market by reporting signs of a rates recovery in premiums, especially in the motor market. "I don't believe there is going to be a price war in household rates," he said. Household premiums have fallen 8 per cent in a year.

Following the creation of Royal & Sun Alliance, GRE itself has become the target of widespread takeover speculation, but Mr Robins said: "I don't believe in that sort of merger. You have to be able to manage the inevitable culture-clashes of two companies that have been building similar businesses over 150 years, at a time of considerable industry strain and change." There had been no bid discussions over GRE, he added.

Meanwhile, Nationwide has switched its annual £100m business in buildings and contents insurance from a group that included GRE, to a cheaper alternative from ITT London & Edinburgh.

Investment Column, page 20

B·AT INDUSTRIES

Dividend up 8%

First half unaudited results to 30 June 1996

PRE-TAX PROFIT	£1,331m	+12%
EARNINGS PER SHARE	26.0p	+12%
DIVIDEND PER SHARE	10.0p	+8%

- Pre-tax profit rose by 12 per cent to £1,331 million, an underlying 8 per cent, excluding the effect of disposals.
- Financial services profit increased by 3 per cent to £554 million, with a reduced profit of £225 million from the life and investment business, and the general business 8 per cent higher at £329 million.
- Tobacco trading profit was up by 7 per cent to £798 million, against last year's outstanding first half, even though there was a significant increase in brand development expenditure in a number of markets.
- B·AT Industries is continuing to make good progress. The Board is declaring an interim dividend of 10.0p, an 8 per cent increase, as part of our long-term commitment to deliver superior total returns for shareholders.

Lord Cairns, Chairman

business

Glaxo finds new life after Zantac

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY TOM STEVENSON

Reports of the early demise of Glaxo Wellcome have clearly been exaggerated. There is life after Zantac with a healthy new drug pipeline making up for declining sales of the best-selling ulcer treatment.

The Wellcome acquisition has been decided in nicely and the debts taken on to finance the £9bn deal last year are coming down at a good tick.

No surprise then that the shares jumped to an immediate premium on the announcement yesterday of better-than-expected first-half figures. Adjusting for the fact that Wellcome only came into the group half-way through the comparable period, which means the reported figures in our table are somewhat misleading, sales pushed ahead by 6 per cent and trading profit rose by 34 per cent. There was a highly encouraging rise in trading margin from 31 per cent to 39 per cent.

No surprise, either, however, that on reflection the market pushed the price all the way back down again as it focused on the long-term outlook for Glaxo. The company is in good shape, but what good news there is is in the price and plenty of worries persist.

First and foremost of these is what will happen to Zantac sales once the all-important US patent expires next July. The 16 per cent decline thanks to competition in Germany does not augur well for a treatment that still accounts for almost a quarter of Glaxo's sales, even after the introduction of Wellcome products and after the undoubtedly success of the company's new product portfolio.

Glaxo reckons the £164m loss in sales from Zantac was more than twice made up by increased sales of "new products", those introduced since 1990, which added £327m during the half, a 51 per cent rise. Excluding Zantac, sales growth was 14 per cent at constant exchange rates.

Glaxo undoubtedly has strong positions in a range of important markets, including respiratory disease, which accounts for 22 per cent of total sales; migraine, where Imigran has become Glaxo's third-largest product; and Aids, where recent successful trial results suggest the company has a tight grip on what could be an enormous moneymaker.

But Zantac is a big milestone around the group's neck, meaning that it will have to run extremely hard just to stand still. Lehman Brothers thinks the long-run growth rate in earnings per share will work out at no more than 8 per cent. Not bad for a £31bn company but hardly the stuff to set investment pulses racing.

On the basis of Lehman's forecast

profits of £3bn this year, the shares stand on a prospective price/earnings ratio of 15. That is hardly a recipe for outperformance and there is much better value elsewhere in the sector.

GRE proves it can go it alone

GRE is scathing about suggestions that it needs a partner and on yesterday's half-year performance it gained some credibility. At least, unlike one of its recently merged peers, the company does not put out press releases in which the quotes are attributed jointly to the executive deputy chairman and the chief executive.

That quaint formula was in Royal & Sun Alliance's announcement of job cuts and management changes, and was ostensibly to reassure the two lots of staff in the merged companies that all their interests were being looked after.

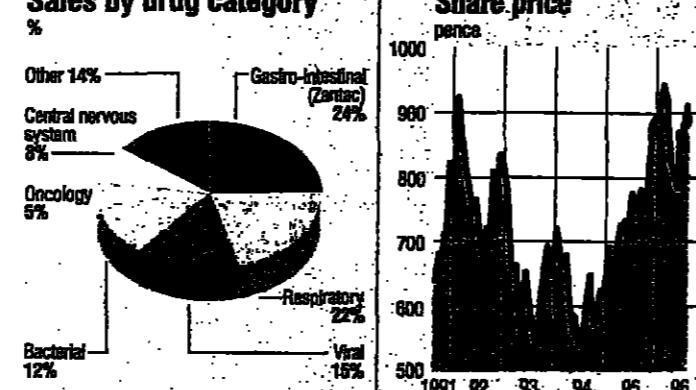
It is hardly a good omen for a smooth integration of the two groups and GRE is arguably better off on its own.

GLAXO: AT A GLANCE

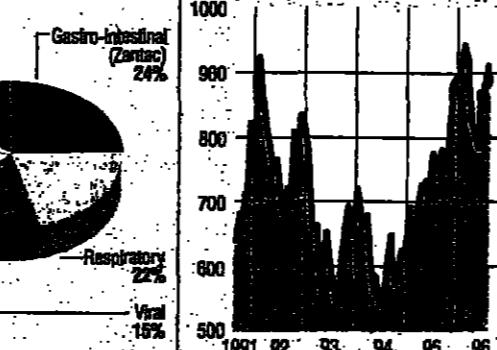
Market value: £21.5bn, share price 894.5p

Trading record	Full year		Half year		
	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Turnover (£bn)	4.93	5.66	10.3	3.62	4.19
Pre-tax profits (£bn)	1.68	1.84	2.38	1.16	1.55
Earnings per share (pence)	39.9	42.7	29.5	24.2	29.1
Dividends per share (pence)	22.0	27.0	29.9	15.0	15.0

Sales by drug category



Share price



in the meantime, GRE will benefit from the freedom to keep its eye on the ball.

Having decided doggedly to continue with its small life business, GRE is also about to add £200m to net asset value with a switch at the end of the year to embedded value accounting. The share price this year has lagged too far behind Royal and General Accident. Good value.

Dairy Crest sets price for float

Dairy Crest, the former marketing arm of the Milk Marketing Board, looks set for a successful stock market flotation, two years after its first attempt was disrupted by the Government's de-regulation of the milk market.

The volatility this time around is not so much in the milk market as the stock market, which has caused Dairy Crest's advisers to price the issue slightly lower than expectations. At a price of 155p the company is valued at £171m.

Thirty per cent of the stock was placed with institutions yesterday with the remainder being given to the 28,000 farmers who jointly owned the company through the Residual Milk Marketing Board. On average they will pocket £6,000 from the float.

Though dealings in the shares are not expected to start until 28 August, an internal market has been set up to enable farmers to trade their shares ahead of that deadline to avoid disorderly selling and buying by the farmer-shareholders.

At 155p, Dairy Crest shares are certainly priced competitively. They are on a price/earnings ratio of eight, while rivals Unigate and Northern Foods both trade on 11 with a less attractive yield. This makes Dairy Crest a good bet and at these levels it is hardly surprising that institutions appear to have fallen over themselves to grab a slice.

Dairy Crest has done much in recent years to slim itself down from a bloated co-operative but it remains Britain's third-largest dairy company. Going forward it will concentrate more on building higher-margin brands like its successful Clover spread and its young but growing Frijj range of milk drinks while reducing its dependency on commodity items such as liquid milk.

The company's operating profits of £35.2m last year on sales of £740m show there is plenty of scope for more margin improvement to come. Good value.

Cable firm rings the changes on phone boxes

CITY DIARY

JOHN WILLCOCK



Good news for fans of the traditional red telephone boxes which were abolished by BT: they're coming back. Except this time they'll be green.

The Telewest TV cable company is scouring the world to buy up any remaining boxes so that they can bring them back to the UK and paint them in Telewest's corporate green.

The green-lidded booths will be set up as a marketing tool wherever Telewest has a concentration of cable users. You will even be able to make real phone calls from them - using the cable network.

Ian Hood, director of corporate communications at Telewest is coy about the scheme: "We are looking for opportunities to promote the brand. It's no secret that our new corporate colours are green. Beyond that, I couldn't possibly comment."

In other words, it's true. So how does BT feel about it?

Howard Hodgson, the long-hair former funeral director and self-styled "fashionboy millionaire" Ronson chief executive was even more immaculately coiffured than usual yesterday.

Just as well, since he was previewing Ronson's first range of men's fashion accessories. Ronson is using its centenary year to attempt to emulate Dunhill and expand beyond the traditional base, in Ronson's case cigarette lighters.

Dermot Reeve, the retired captain of Warwickshire County Cricket Club and good friend of Mr Hodgson's, was also on hand at the breakfest preview in London to do a slice.

Any UK investment bank with pretensions to rival the American "bulge bracket" giants knows that at some point it has to gain a US presence. A similar problem faces British law firms that want to compete globally in the highly lucrative securities area. Good news then that City solicitors Freshfields has managed to poach Tom Joyce, an American securities specialist with 24 years' experience at New York law firm Shearman & Sterling. Mr Joyce has already spent 10 years in London and will be building a small US securities law team for Freshfields to support its capital markets practice.

You can understand why David Rowland, chairman of Lloyd's, doesn't want to revise the offer again, despite threats of legal action by some names' groups. The cost of another mailing could really send Lloyd's beneath the waves.

Rob Meakin is well qualified for his new job as director of human resources at British Gas Energy. One of Mr Meakin's biggest previous jobs was at British Leyland in the infamous 1970s.

It was during these years that the many "Spanish Practices" at Leyland plants reached their nadir. Strikes, Red Robbo, the Marina and Allegro represent some of the most depressing days of British industrial decline.

Mr Meakin, 46, joined British Leyland/Rover in 1973. Since then he has concentrated on "helping to rejuvenate businesses and transforming them into highly focused services and providers with a strong emphasis on customer satisfaction".

Having stared into the abyss at Leyland, he will know what British Gas Energy should avoid. And he could be useful at dealing with complaints too.

Colorvision calls in receivers

NIGEL COPE

Colorvision, the troubled Liverpool-based television and video retailer whose management slogan was "izzy whizzy let's get busy", collapsed into receivership yesterday threatening 74 shops and 800 jobs.

The company blamed poor trading and the effects of the Office of Fair Trading decision last May that it was "mined to revoke". Colorvision's credit licences following customers' complaints.

Colorvision has debts of £1.5m and was expected to record a loss including exceptional items of £4m this year compared with a £1m profit in 1995.

Colorvision shares were suspended yesterday afternoon pending clarification of the company's financial position. The announcement that it had called in Arthur Andersen as administrators followed soon afterwards. The board said it had taken the decision "in view of the company's current and anticipated trading

levels together with its worsening cash flow position."

Colorvision is the latest in a long line of electrical retailers to be laid low by the cut throat market. In the last few months both Escom and Powerstore have also called in the receivers.

Colorvision has been in dire

straits since the OFT issued its "mined to revoke" notice. It

May it called in new management led by executive chairman Sir Brian Wolfsen. They cut costs which included some shop closures and redundancies.

Relying on science: Lord Cairns says the climate of opinion in the US remains extremely hostile



TOM STEVENSON
City Editor

BAT yesterday promised faster-than-expected growth in its financial services businesses after the consolidation of its asset management, general and life insurance operations into one division.

Sandy Leitch, chief executive of the newly formed British American Financial Services arm, said the division had targeted an extra 20 per cent growth above previous expectations over the next five years.

Bafs, which brings together Eagle Star, Allied Dunbar and Threadneedle Asset Management, was created recently to give the financial operations greater coherence and to create cost-cutting opportunities.

It is estimated sharing computer and other support services could save Bafs £50m a year. The consolidation is also expected to help the division tar-

get overseas markets. "To become a world-beater we must succeed beyond the white cliffs of Dover. Asia will be a top development priority," Mr Leitch said.

Bafs already has a presence in Hong Kong and Taiwan and expects to be granted licenses in India and China within the next two years.

The need to expand overseas was underlined by interim figures showing a reduction in life and investment profits offsetting better general insurance returns. Eagle Star's first-half profit slipped to £108m (£113m), while Allied Dunbar's profits fell 9 per cent to £96m.

Those poor results could not prevent a 12 per cent rise in group pre-tax profits to £1.35bn for the six months to June as one-off business disposals, recovery in US insurance and steady growth in cigarette sales especially in Asia, made up for the disappointments in UK

debtors.

The regulator argued that the current price-cap, which allows bills to rise by inflation plus 3.5 per cent, was too generous. Last year NIE profits surged by 23 per cent to £107m, compared with £75m between 1993 and 1994, the first year for the company on the stock market.

Charles Coulthard, the

deputy director general of Offer (NI) said: "They can either say 'no' and it will be the MMC, or yes", in which case we get on with the price controls. We consider the existing price controls totally inappropriate. If they disagree, we are duty bound to take them to the MMC."

Mr Coulthard insisted that the new price cap would still allow sufficient cash to enable the company to increase dividends by more than inflation.

Dr Patrick Haren, the chief

executive of NIE, said that

investment would have to fall by about £70m a year, which could damage customer service. He said a final decision on whether to risk an MMC referral should be taken in a few weeks. "At the end of the day, a company doesn't set itself up to manage MMC referrals," he said.

Scottish Power, meanwhile, has lost a High Court challenge against Offer as to whether or not its price controls should use the same formula as that applying to Scottish Hydro. The firm is considering an appeal.

Tough price curbs knock NI Electricity

this month. The five-year price-cap proposed by the regulator, Offer (NI), would slash Northern Ireland Electricity's income from the core electricity transmission, distribution and supply business by 30 per cent from next April, reducing revenues by more than £200m. In addition, prices could rise by no more than inflation minus 2 per cent a year.

The formula translates into a cut of £40 off bills of £330, in Northern Ireland. The average bill in England and Wales is £270. NIE argues that it is

being unfairly penalised, given that 60 per cent of household bills go to pay for privately-run generators.

Offer (NI) has already threatened to take the generators to the MMC.

The regulator argued that the current price-cap, which allows bills to rise by inflation plus 3.5 per cent, was too generous. Last year NIE profits surged by 23 per cent to £107m, compared with £75m between 1993 and 1994, the first year for the company on the stock market.

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It was the first time Kevin Harrington, who built up the business under the name Harrington Kilbride as a 17-year-old, had come face to face with the board since he resigned last year. Mr Harrington still owns

12 per cent of the shares after a life-or-death refinancing last September by the new chief executive, Ian Fletcher.

Waving a copy of the Cadbury code on corporate governance, Mr Harrington accused the board of conflicts of interest stemming from a magazine contract Harrington had secured with Mr Fletcher's private business empire.

The former head of the

company repeatedly cross-examined the board on why this information had not been disclosed in the annual report.

In a frank exchange of views,

Mr Fletcher attacked his predecessor's business record, charging him with "extravagance".</p

Heavenly success for Island

RICHARD EDMONDSON
reports from Goodwood

There were deep clouds and occasional cracking over Trundle Hill yesterday. The noise may have been coming from a party. For the second time in five days the Pearly Gates will have been reverting to the roars of the Moller brothers, Eric and Budgie, as their chocolate and gold colours were yet again successful in a Group One race, this time with First Island in the Sussex Stakes. And while Pentire, Saturday's King George VI & Queen Elizabeth Stakes winner, will no longer be cause for elevation following his sale to Japan, First Island will be around for some time to come. So, it seems will be the influence of the brothers.

Eric Moller set aside funds before his death to continue the family influence posthumously under the banner of Mollers Racing. The operation has become self-financing and more following the feats of Petardia, First Trump, Niccolite and the two recent winners.

Reports that First Island worked well recently with Pentire were not sufficient to put him at the top of the betting market ahead of Charnwood Forest. Pentus of the parade ring would not have put supporters off the favourite either.

While Matiya looked like a midfielder, all chunkiness and blue and white bangles lending the appearance of football socks, and Mistle Cat was almost an apparition with his ghostly greyness, Charnwood Forest stood out. The colt possesses proportions that would accommodate several Trojans and his frame is covered by a taut, gleaming dark hide.

He must be hard to miss, which is just one reason why Michael Hills, First Island's jockey, chose to track him. For a while this policy looked doomed. Charnwood Forest was trapped on the inside and First Island was in even greater trouble on his rival's heels. The favourite



First Island swoops past Charnwood Forest in yesterday's Sussex Stakes

Photograph: Robert Hallam

eventually managed to snap his shackles, but the chestnut had further problems. First Island was temporarily held up between Alnhaar and Sorbie Tower, but at the furlong point he moved like wet soap between the palms bursting forward to challenge Charnwood Forest. The big horse was swiftly brushed aside.

"It was a very classy performance," Geoff Wragg, the winning trainer, said. "He's always been a very nice and versatile horse, but he's had problems; he put a stiff one terribly when he was younger. He might run next in the International Stakes at York or at Deauville. He's improving all the time and we'll keep him

in training next year, when he could develop into an Ascot horse."

Michael Hills is developing into one of the country's leading riders, and this success, following Pentire's and Shaamit in the Derby, ensured this will be a season to remember whatever he manages in the future. His identical twin, Richard, on the other hand, would welcome a spot of amnesia.

Hills' major (by 20 minutes) was on board the favourite, Salim, in the Champion Stakes, a race which has delivered Classic winners such as Troy, Dr Devilous, Mister Baileys and Don't Forget Me. Not only did he fail, he was demoted

from second to last for irresponsible riding and the jockey was awarded a seven-day suspension.

The contest went to Putra, who has a similar physique to Bambi. The two-year-old is nevertheless a stout performer and he earned a quote of 14-1 (with William Hill) for next year's 2,000 Guineas.

Another of Putra's qualities is that he requires little pandering. "He is very athletic," Paul Cole, the winning trainer, said. "He is a horse who trains himself." The Whatcombe man did not comment on whether this meant he would be returning a portion of the training fee to Putra's owner.

Tregaron to fulfil fears of bookies

GREG WOOD

GOODWOOD

HYPERION
2.15 Arnhem
2.45 Raphane
3.20 Grey Shot
3.50 Sue's Return (nb)

GOING: Good to firm (wet-ground).
STABLES: 2-1, 3-1, 4-1, 5-1 outside; remainder - inside.

DRAW ADVANTAGE: High for 5f and 6f. High for 7f to 1m.

Right-hand course with sharp bends and gradients. Suitable for well-balanced horses.

Course is north of Chichester between A286 and A285. Chichester station four miles away. ADMISIION: Richardson Enclosure - members and their guests only; Gordon Enclosure 1st; Public Enclosure 50p (accompanied under-18s free both enclosures); Train Enclosure 50p. CAR PARK: £5 for 8 car park, remainder free.

Photo: S. H. Smith

Like a mouse which suddenly scents that the local tabby is in the vicinity, bookmakers tend to get very nervous when Reg Akhurst has a twinkle in his eye 24 hours before one of the season's finest handicaps. That gleam was unmistakable yesterday, and any bookie who awoke this morning to find the hairs on the back of his neck standing bolt upright now knows the reason why.

Akhurst will saddle Tregaron, the second favourite, in the Schweppes Golden Mile at Goodwood today, and while many will prefer the claims of Missile, an apparent blot on the

horizon, the man who knows more about pounds and ounces than the average weights-and-measures inspector is not exactly wracked by doubt.

Tregaron's had a huke in the weights, he's gone up 2lb for winning two average races," Akhurst said yesterday. "And if the race was re-handericapped, Missile would have a lot more weight. You've got to respect him, but I'd still back him."

Nor is Tregaron's wide draw of deep concern. "If it was one of 22 it would be a bit worried, but not when it's five of 18," the trainer said. "He's a horse with a bit of pace and you can put him where you like."

The doubt about Missile is his habit of peering at those around him during a race, which is the mark of a worrier and thus a horse who is unlikely to enjoy a robust scrum around the tight turns of Goodwood. At around 9-4 it is not a chance worth taking. The 6-1 offered about TREGARON (nb map 3.30) by Coral this morning is too good to miss, particularly since few of the longer-priced animals make each-way appeal (Multi-tower at 20-1, the exception).

Akhurst has a serious chance in the Goodwood Cup too, but as he admitted yesterday, Admiral's Well "would have a much better chance over another half a mile". Today's two miles should be more to the liking of Persian Punch (next best 3.20), while Gunmar (2.15) is another three-year-old stay-with-an-interest.

In a disappointing renewal of the Richmond Stakes, Proud Native (2.45), who handled a downland course well when winning the Woodcote Stakes at Epsom, can beat the Royal Ascot runner-up Raphane. Any drastic alterations in the 2,000 Guineas betting, though, are more likely to be a result of Zamindar's colt (the 10-1 favourite for the 1997 Classic). Yesterday's results, page 25

2.15 HEYSHOTT RATED STAKES (CLASS C HANDICAP) [BBC2]
£15,000 added 3YO 6f

1. 2-15041 RENOWN (USA) (22) P/F D. Smith C. Morris 6/9 D. 1st Derby 6
2. 240201 CIRROCO (USA) (23) G. English P. Chapple-Haym 9/5 1st
3. 282403 ARNHEM (24) J. Gandy C. Morris 9/5 1st
4. 352234 SHAMF (25) J. Davis W. Muller 9/5 1st
5. 202022 INFERNAL (22) D. Smith Mrs M. Morris 8/11 1st
6. 503334 EL-A-MED (23) (nb) Andrew Morris L. Currie B. 11 1st
7. 13 JAZZ KING (24) (nb) Michaela Morris G. Hayes 8/11 1st
8. 356-042 SUMMER (USA) (22) (nb) Mrs D. Smith J. Morris 8/11 1st
9. 16 356-051 MIGHTY PRINCESS (USA) (24) (nb) Linda Williams 8/11 1st

10. 2-15021 RAPHAEL (25) (nb) Linda Williams 8/11 1st

BETTING: 4-1 Rennown, 9-2 Nonsense, 12-2 Infamy, 15-2 Arnhem, 8-1 Infamy, 15-2 Raphane, 16-2 Jazz King, 23-2 Shamf, 24-2 Currie, 25-2 Mighty Princess.

Photo: S. H. Smith

2.45 RICHMOND STAKES (CLASS A) (Group 2) [BBC2]
£40,000 added 2YO colts and geldings 6f

1. 62121 RAPHAEL (USA) (20) P/D Smith C. Morris 9/5 D. 1st Derby 6
2. 214-224 CLOSE RELATIVE (22) (nb) Mrs D. Smith C. Morris 8/11 1st
3. 11211 CRYSTAL (23) (nb) Mrs D. Smith C. Morris 8/11 1st
4. 521214 PROUD NATIVE (24) (nb) Linda Williams 8/11 1st
5. 22242 ROMAN (USA) (23) (nb) Linda Williams 8/11 1st

6. 352234 SPANISH (USA) (23) (nb) Linda Williams 8/11 1st

7. 12-21224 TREGARON (25) (nb) Linda Williams 8/11 1st

8. 2-15021 RENOWN (USA) (22) (nb) Linda Williams 8/11 1st

9. 16 356-042 SUMMER (USA) (22) (nb) Linda Williams 8/11 1st

10. 2-15021 RAPHAEL (25) (nb) Linda Williams 8/11 1st

BETTING: 4-1 Rennown, 9-2 Raphane, 12-2 Infamy, 15-2 Currie, 23-2 Mighty Princess.

Photo: S. H. Smith

3.20 GARRARD GOODWOOD CUP (CLASS A) (Group 2) [BBC2]
£60,000 added 2YO Penalties 6f

1. 5145-041 AMIRAH'S HELM (23) P/D Smith C. Morris 6/9 D. 1st Derby 6
2. 320-221 DABYRUM (23) (nb) P/D Smith C. Morris 6/9 1st

3. 212-215 GREY SHOT (23) (nb) Linda Williams 6/9 1st

4. 350-211 LEAR WHITE (24) (nb) Linda Williams 6/9 1st

5. 053444 PERSONAL PUNCH (23) (nb) Linda Williams 7/3 1st

6. 352234 SPANISH (USA) (23) (nb) Linda Williams 7/3 1st

7. 12-21224 TREGARON (25) (nb) Linda Williams 7/3 1st

8. 2-15021 RENOWN (USA) (22) (nb) Linda Williams 7/3 1st

9. 16 356-042 SUMMER (USA) (22) (nb) Linda Williams 7/3 1st

10. 2-15021 RAPHAEL (25) (nb) Linda Williams 7/3 1st

BETTING: 4-1 Raphane, 9-2 Infamy, 12-2 Currie, 16-2 Lear White, 22-2 Spanish.

Photo: S. H. Smith

3.50 SCHWEPPES GOLDEN MILE HANDICAP (CLASS B) [BBC2]
£15,000 added 3m Penalties Value £45,250

1. 8-32032 GREEN HORN (USA) (21) P/D Smith C. Morris 9/10 1st

2. 20-41212 GREY SHOT (23) (nb) Linda Williams 9/5 1st

3. 212-215 LEAR WHITE (24) (nb) Linda Williams 9/5 1st

4. 350-211 PERSONAL PUNCH (23) (nb) Linda Williams 7/3 1st

5. 20-20044 AUTUMN AFFAIR (23) (nb) Linda Williams 7/3 1st

6. 050-151 TREGARON (25) (nb) Linda Williams 7/3 1st

7. 12-21224 RENOWN (USA) (22) (nb) Linda Williams 7/3 1st

8. 2-15021 RAPHAEL (25) (nb) Linda Williams 7/3 1st

9. 16 356-042 SUMMER (USA) (22) (nb) Linda Williams 7/3 1st

10. 2-15021 RENOWN (USA) (22) (nb) Linda Williams 7/3 1st

11. 16 356-042 SUMMER (USA) (22) (nb) Linda Williams 7/3 1st

12. 2-15021 RENOWN (USA) (22) (nb) Linda Williams 7/3 1st

13. 16 356-042 SUMMER (USA) (22) (nb) Linda Williams 7/3 1st

14. 2-15021 RENOWN (USA) (22) (nb) Linda Williams 7/3 1st

15. 16 356-042 SUMMER (USA) (22) (nb) Linda Williams 7/3 1st

16. 2-15021 RENOWN (USA) (22) (nb) Linda Williams 7/3 1st

17. 16 356-042 SUMMER (USA) (22) (nb) Linda Williams 7/3 1st

18. 000002 MINORU (USA) (22) (nb) Linda Williams 7/3 1st

19. 000002 MINORU (USA) (22) (nb) Linda Williams 7/3 1st

20. 000002 MINORU (USA) (22) (nb) Linda Williams 7/3 1st

21. 000002 MINORU (USA) (22) (nb) Linda Williams 7/3 1st

22. 000002 MINORU (USA) (22) (nb) Linda Williams 7/3 1st

23. 000002 MINORU (USA) (22) (nb) Linda Williams 7/3 1st

24. 000002 MINORU (USA) (22) (nb) Linda Williams 7/3 1st

25. 000002 MINORU (USA) (22) (nb) Linda Williams 7/3 1st

26. 000002 MINORU (USA) (22) (nb) Linda Williams 7/3 1st

27. 000002 MINORU (USA) (22) (nb) Linda Williams 7/3 1st

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31. 000002 MINORU (USA) (22) (nb) Linda Williams 7/3 1st

32. 000002 MINORU (USA) (22) (nb) Linda Williams 7/3 1st

33. 000002 MINORU (USA) (22) (nb) Linda Williams 7/3 1st

34. 000002 MINORU (USA) (22) (nb) Linda Williams 7/3 1st

35. 000002 MINORU (USA) (22) (nb) Linda Williams 7/3 1st

36. 000002 MINORU (USA) (22) (nb) Linda Williams 7/3 1st

37. 000002 MINORU (USA) (22) (nb) Linda Williams 7/3 1st


**GRAND PRIX
'96 RACE
SCHEDULE**

Hungarian GP
August 11
Belgian GP
August 25
Italian GP
September 8
Portuguese GP
September 22
Japanese GP
October 13

Team Position Check Line:
0891 891 806

Results & Top 50 Teams:
0891 891 807

Calls cost 39p per minute, 49p per minute at all other times.
Rules are as previously published and are available on request.



Damon Hill winning pole position in the German Grand Prix

Photograph: EMPICS

The latest scores and results

At last – a real race. After the high speed procession that was Silverstone, last Sunday's German Grand Prix at Hockenheim was the ideal antidote, a slipstreaming thriller that was a throwback to the days before wings and chicanes strangled racing. There is no doubt at all who the hero of the day was – see the Driver of the Day box for a full eulogy – but we should also show our appreciation to Damon Hill for making such a Horlicks of his start and giving himself so much work to do later in the race. Hill is making something of a speciality of bogging down when the lights go out and needs to do some work to sort the problem out. There is absolutely no point in producing a heroic "Banzai" lap in Saturday qualifying – as Hill did at Hockenheim – if you are then

going to sit on the grid and wave half the field past before you set off in pursuit. For all of which whingeing, Hill once again came up with a bucketload of points for his Dream Team managers. The only category he failed to score in was "most improved", but then while he is taking all the pole positions he is always going to have a tough time improving on first place. Aside from the regular top scorers, Heinz-Harald Frentzen put in a useful run to finish with ten points, including five for the fastest pit-stop. As the F1 silly season gets underway, Frentzen is being talked about as a replacement for Hill at Williams next season. But the German has had a lousy year with Sauber, fighting a lack of power from their Ford engine and occasionally being shown up by

his British team-mate Johnny Herbert. He will have been determined to do well in front of his home crowd last weekend, and with a little more luck might have made it into the points proper.

Ricardo Rosset put in a steady run to gather eight points for Arrows, but any Dream Team manager with Arrows chassis will have been very displeased with his team-mate Jos Verstappen, who dumped it in

the book to keep Hill behind him at Hockenheim, and for all his protestations it would have been surprising if Hill had pulled off a clean pass. Berger is the most experienced of the current grand prix drivers, and given the similarity in top speed of the Renault-powered Williams and Benetton, he had plenty of defensive options available. And it was typical that he was generous and optimistic in defeat, for Berger, one of the funniest men in motor racing as well as one of the wisest, knows that what goes around comes around, and with he wants it. He used all the – legitimate – tricks in a little trick his day will come again.

that what goes around comes around, and with he wants it. He used all the – legitimate – tricks in a little trick his day will come again.

DRIVER OF THE DAY: GERHARD BERGER



WIN a drive in a grand prix car

The Dream Team manager with the highest number of points at the end of the Grand Prix Championship season will win our top prize – a drive in a 650bhp F1 car.

You will be flown to the AGS team's training school in the south of France for the most exhilarating experience of your life. The school specialises in F1 courses and provides all the racewear and instruction you will need for a day driving F1 and other single seat cars.

INDIVIDUAL GRAND PRIX PRIZES STILL TO BE WON
You can enter our Formula 1 Dream Team game at any time during the grand prix season. Even if you don't win our top prize, don't worry, there are still prizes to be won with each grand prix race. Enter for the Hungarian Grand Prix and you could win exclusive membership to Team McLaren, which offers a host of unique benefits and privileges. Get The Independent on Wednesday 7 or Thursday 8 August for details on how to register.

GERMAN GRAND PRIX PRIZE WINNER
Congratulations to Diane Sullivan from London and her team Do or Die. She has won a trip for two to the Belgian Grand Prix.



Overall Top 50 Dream Teams

1 Dan's Reckless Racers	1 A K Racing Team A
2 Sinckley Formula 1	2 Speed Buggy
3 Peanjuree	3 Drive Blind
4 The Dare Devils	4 Used Rubber
5 Dream Machines	5 The 7 Percenters
6 Harvey	6 Follow Me Please Racing
7 God's Son	7 Drack
8 Bisland's Bangers	8 Stagnant 3
9 I'm Alright Jacques	9 Smith Sizzlers
10 Bino One	10 Emily Zoom
11 They Who Dare	11 Charlie's Choice
12 DSC	12 Track Suit Racing UK
13 Petrol Heads	13 Eagle Racing
14 Ward's Wonders	14 Skidids
15 Bourbon	15 Team Shambles
16 Red Rose Racing	16 Overdrive
17 Formula Fantastic	17 Diesel Dreamers
18 Herb's Flyers	18 Vernotti Racing
19 Players One	19 Jack Burchell Ford

Grand Prix Shopping List

POINTS SCORED

DRIVERS	DRIVE UNITS	DRIVE POINTS
1 M Schumacher	14	131
2 J Alesi	22	140
3 D Hill	34	258
4 G Berger	7	94
5 A Sauber	19	118
6 E Irvine	0	42
7 J Villeneuve	17	210
8 M Hakkinen	2	125
9 H H Frentzen	10	61
10 J Arnoux	0	52
11 R Barrichello	14	82
12 J Herbert	-1	50
13 M Blundell	6	63
14 P Lamby	6	31
15 M Brundle	0	55
16 U Katayama	-3	1
17 J Verstappen	5	4
18 O Paris	5	81
19 L Badoer	0	5
20 R Rosset	0	19
21 A Monttermini	0	7
22 G Fisichella	0	7
23 V Sospini	0	0
24 T Marques	0	0
25 F Lagorce	0	0
26 H Noda	0	0
27 T Inoue	0	0
28 M Blundell	0	0
29 J-C Bouffon	0	0
30 K Brack	0	0
31 K Burt	0	0
32 E Collard	0	0
33 N Fontana	0	0
34 D Franchitti	0	0
35 N Larini	0	0
36 J Magnussen	0	0
37 A Prost	0	0
38 G Tarquini	0	0
39 K Wendlinger	0	0

CHASSIS	CHASSIS UNITS	CHASSIS POINTS
1 Mclaren	16	140
2 Benetton	20	192
3 Williams	20	192
4 Sauber	0	52
5 Lotus	0	52
6 Jordan	12	79
7 Ligier	9	80
8 Tyrrell	-3	41
9 Minardi	0	33
10 Forti	0	72

ENGINES	ENGINE UNITS	ENGINE POINTS
1 Renault	20	196
2 Mugen	16	126
3 Ferrari	14	99
4 Honda	9	131
5 Yamaha	0	0
6 Ford	11	98
7 Yamaha	0	64
8 Ford	0	24
9 Ford Zetec-V8	0	0
10 Ford ED-V8	0	34

Join over 29,000 readers who are playing Formula 1 Dream Team

1000 in 150

Acfield advocates rest for top players

Cricket

ADAM SZRETER

The first instalment of the Acfield Report into the state of English cricket, published yesterday, added a little fuel to a small fire that promises one day to catch light in spectacular fashion. But the message to anyone waiting for radical changes after England's dog's dinner of a winter is don't hold your breath.

The working party appointed by the Test and County Cricket Board in March and headed by David Acfield, the chairman of the TCCB's cricket committee, gave its support to the principle of allowing the chairman of selectors to relieve any England player from county duty if it is felt the player is in need of a rest prior to a Test match.

This is an endorsement of the views of the current chairman of selectors, Raymond Illing-

worth, although as he is standing down this autumn that is neither here nor there. Of far greater relevance is the views of the counties themselves, and at the moment it is hard to imagine many of them agreeing to the further absence of players who already miss a large chunk of their season. They, after all, are the players whom the members pay their money to watch.

Acfield's working party, which includes the Lancashire chairman, Bob Bennett, and the former England captains David Gower and Mike Gatting, have compiled their report from questionnaires to leading figures in the sport including the county chairmen, Test umpires and members of the England Test squad. But Acfield himself admitted: "The counties have already expressed their resistance when the cricket committee suggested the same thing."

They would prefer to keep it as a gentleman's agreement. I think it is easier and simpler and neater just to have one person with the right to say it but obviously that very much depends on the chairman of cricket using that power sparingly and sensibly."

Bennett, whose job at Lancashire would seem to be at odds with the report's primary recommendation, said: "Whether the chairman of selectors should have the veto over players will be one of the more controversial topics when it comes under discussion with the TCCB."

"It's unlikely to happen very often that the chairman would withdraw a batsman for example. You can understand the case of Michael Atherton because he has the extra pressures of captaincy but in the main I would have thought it would apply to the quicker bowlers."

The report claims that members of the England squad have played an average of 152 days competitive cricket a year, compared to Australia's 100, and recommends top players be given rest before and after the domestic season and, if necessary, during the course of the season.

The working party also recommends that the present England hierarchy - with a captain, coach and chairman of selectors - be kept rather than revert to the supreme role which Illingworth held until this summer.

They do not advocate the coach sitting in on the selection panel, instead suggesting a four-strong team of the chairman, the captain and two other selectors choosing Test squads.

The working party, which will be followed by another this winter looking into the structure of English cricket, advocates a streamlining of the management and administration of the national team.

They suggest the institution of an "England Management Committee" split into three sub-committees with responsibility for the selection of England and England A, the development of excellence and England youth teams and "international affairs", whatever that means.

Butcher, the man of the match, added 39 more runs to his overnight 52 as he and Hollioake took Surrey to within 22 runs of victory. At that point Butcher was stumped off a Keith Parsons wide after spending more than three hours at the crease.

Holloake saw them through, though, finishing 45 not out as they reached 226 for 5 with more than seven of their allotted 60 overs remaining.

Lancashire yesterday welcomed another Roses battle with Yorkshire after the archrivals were paired together for next month's NatWest Trophy semi-finals. Mike Watkinson's side, who beat Yorkshire in the Benson and Hedges Cup last month, will again have home advantage following the draw.

NATWEST TROPHY Semi-final: Saturday 13 August, Lancashire v Yorkshire (last round); Sunday 14 August, Yorkshire v Lancashire (last round).

SURVEY First Innings (Overseas): 1. 1st XI v Kent 12-4; 2. 1st XI v Sussex 12-4; 3. 1st XI v Lancashire 12-4; 4. 1st XI v Middlesex 12-4; 5. 1st XI v Essex 12-4; 6. 1st XI v Nottinghamshire 12-4; 7. 1st XI v Warwickshire 12-4; 8. 1st XI v Gloucestershire 12-4; 9. 1st XI v Leicestershire 12-4; 10. 1st XI v Derbyshire 12-4; 11. 1st XI v Northamptonshire 12-4; 12. 1st XI v Lancashire 12-4; 13. 1st XI v Nottinghamshire 12-4; 14. 1st XI v Warwickshire 12-4; 15. 1st XI v Gloucestershire 12-4; 16. 1st XI v Leicestershire 12-4; 17. 1st XI v Derbyshire 12-4; 18. 1st XI v Northants 12-4; 19. 1st XI v Lancashire 12-4; 20. 1st XI v Nottinghamshire 12-4; 21. 1st XI v Warwickshire 12-4; 22. 1st XI v Gloucestershire 12-4; 23. 1st XI v Leicestershire 12-4; 24. 1st XI v Derbyshire 12-4; 25. 1st XI v Northants 12-4; 26. 1st XI v Lancashire 12-4; 27. 1st XI v Nottinghamshire 12-4; 28. 1st XI v Warwickshire 12-4; 29. 1st XI v Gloucestershire 12-4; 30. 1st XI v Leicestershire 12-4; 31. 1st XI v Derbyshire 12-4; 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Rhythms out of sync with Olympic spirit

Ribbons and pretty lights cannot mask the absurdity of some of the latest sports to win medal status, laments Ken Jones

The quote from David Walechinsky's *History of the Olympic Games*, the idea behind the modern pentathlon is that a soldier is ordered to deliver a message. He starts out on an unfamiliar horse, but is forced to dismount and fight a duel with swords. He escapes, but is trapped and has to shoot his way out with a pistol. Then he swims across a river, and finally finishes his assignment by running 4,000 metres through woods.

If conceived as an officer-class event, nothing probably was seen to better represent the Olympic ideal put forth 100 years ago by Baron Pierre de Coubertin, founder of the modern Games.

That the pentathlon is now threatened with extinction, one of the sports coming under close scrutiny by the International Olympic Committee, signifies an attitude born of rampant commercial exploitation and the escalating demands of television.

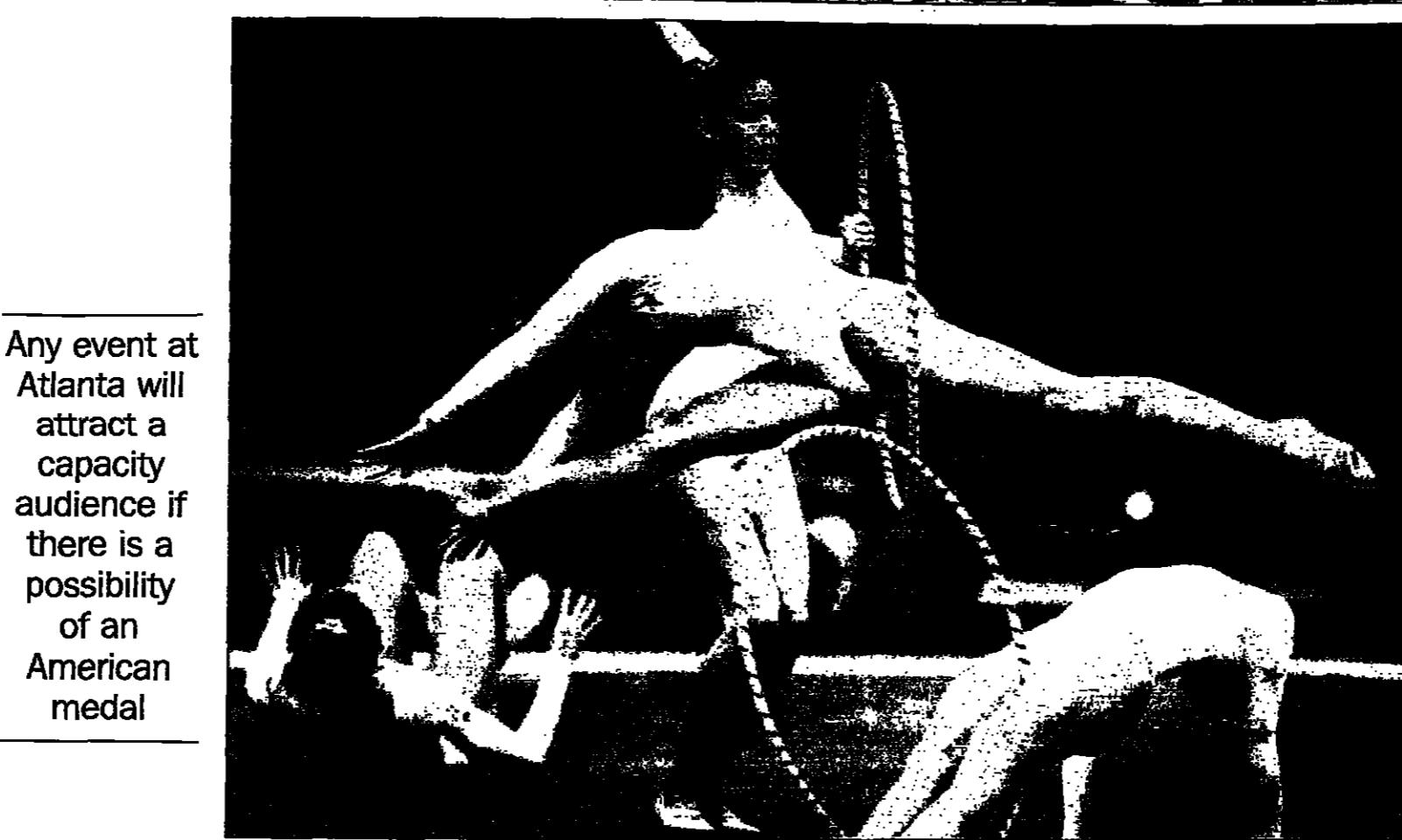
For the pentathlon, boxing and related events that echo trials of combat on which the ancient Games were founded, Atlanta 1996 is a year of Olympic foreboding.

Part of the IOC's policy seems to be that if you can't stop a logo on it get rid of it. Instead the ludicrous beauty-shop trivias of synchronised swimming and rhythmic gymnastics: the absurdity of beach volleyball.

Can you imagine this? During training at Emory University this week, rhythmic gymnasts expressed concern that cool blasts of air would mess up their ribbons. Lights sighted on the arena's dark ceiling were also considered to be a problem. "The equipment gets lost in those lights," the Russian ribbon champion, Anna Zaripova, said. "I have a black ball and black clubs, so I may need to put white tape or something."

Poor girls. Such problems.

"I just hope they get the air conditioning right," the US national champion, Jessica Davis, said, recalling that her ribbon got so tangled during an event here last May that several seconds were lost while she unknotted it.



Sport or spectacle? The Russian synchronised swimming team (above) make patterns in the water while the rhythmic gymnasts of the American team jump through hoops in order to impress the judges

Photographs: Empics (top) and AFP

Any event at Atlanta will attract a capacity audience if there is a possibility of an American medal

Apparently, coping with such difficulties separates the best from the rest.

"I haven't done anything special to prepare for the air conditioning," Elena Vitrichenko, the Ukraine's 1996 world ribbon champion, said. "At this level,

member from Esther Williams movies. Japan were a daze of lime green suits, cartwheeling and karate-kicking their way into the pool to Ninja music.

For Canada it was crosses on the chest and Beethoven's "Ode to Joy," while the Americans

modestly took the plunge to strains of the "Hallelujah Chorus".

Some admiration can be held out for the lung power of these pulchritudinous performers, but what synchronised swimming means in traditional Olympic

terms is beyond this reporter. As there was a large and enthusiastic crowd the obvious conclusion is that any event at Atlanta will attract a capacity audience if there is the possibility of an American medal.

The debate over what con-

sstitutes a sport is endless. The ancient games began with foot races, to which events of a combative nature – boxing, wrestling and the hurling of missiles – were later added. Foot races and field events remain the pinnacle of Olympic

A golf tournament would have been swooped on by the makers of golf equipment and clothing. A similar philosophy applied to the introduction of tennis at the 1988 Seoul Games, and baseball in Barcelona four years ago.

What next? There is talk that ballroom dancing and snooker will play a part, if first as exhibition sports, for the next Olympics in Sydney. "Why not?" asked a man of romantic mind this week. Daft as it may sound, there are even people out there pressing a case for bodybuilding.

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Sciandri leads the break to win bronze



By Robin Nicholls

Max Sciandri brought British cycling to the brink of Olympic glory yesterday. The Derby-born rider, who was brought up in Italy and used his British birthright to earn a Games place, gave his new team their first road race bronze for 40 years.

Not since Alan Jackson's third in Melbourne had British road racing been in the Olympic medals and Sciandri was the man who put the match to the short fuse of a highly charged race which for the first time included the mainstream professionals from Europe.

The gold fell to Switzerland's Pascal Richard who left

his sprint until the last 50 metres to edge out Rolf Sorensen of Denmark, with Sciandri third two seconds behind.

As the 222-kilometre race around the upturn suburb of Buckhead reached its climax Sciandri, not for the first time, responded to an attack by American Lance Armstrong.

The Texan's desperate last

bid to win a cycling gold for the

United States failed as Sciandri, Sorensen and Richard reigned clear.

The three had been teammates in the past but as Richard said after receiving his medal: "This is the Olympics and it is every man for himself. They may have been my team-mates and we knew each other's strengths but today it was down to the individual."

The race around 17 laps of the well-heeled suburb past neat lawns and flowerbeds of mansions owned by millionaires was always lively.

It was not, however, until the last eight laps that the tempo

rose to produce a group of 12 leaders from whom the decisive move came.

Sciandri who has suffered all season from injuries and illness said: "It was a very confused race and I did not know what was happening. I was lucky to be in that move."

"May I went a little too early, but if I had not done that, I wouldn't have had a chance of winning the gold."

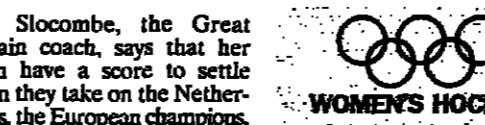
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Dutch set for dressage gold



By Gillian Newsum

Anky van Grunsven's outstanding performance yesterday at Georgia's international horse park, Conyers, has put the Netherlands in line for its first Olympic gold medal in dressage.

Riding the 13-year-old Bonfire, with his familiar high knee action, van Grunsven, 28, scored 1670 for her Grand Prix special test which combined with Saturday's Grand Prix result, has put the Dutch rider a mere 1.3 marks ahead of Germany's Isabell Werth on Gigio.

There has been intense rivalry between these two riders since the 1994 world championships in the Hague when van Grunsven, who is trained by Sjef Jannink, won the world title and Werth won the Grand Prix special.

For the first time in Olympic dressage the scores from both these tests and from the Grand Prix will be combined to give a

single medal winner.

Van Grunsven will start as the clear favourite for the individual gold in Saturday's freestyle competition for which she has had a new music score specially composed.

Richard Davison, who is Britain's sole representative in the Grand Prix special, failed to qualify for the freestyle on the nine-year-old Astari.

But this was only the second international Grand Prix special for Astari's career and Davison was quite pleased with the youngster. "He was feeling tired but he still tried hard," said Davison.

The order for Britain's show jumping team into today's Nations Cup to decide the team

medals is Nick Skelton (Show Time), Michael Whitaker (Two Step), Geoff Billington (It's Otto), and John Whitaker (Welham).

Blood tests carried out on Two Step after his poor performance on Monday indicate that he has suffered a slight virus. And Whitaker thinks the horse's back has also been troubling him. "We're keeping our fingers crossed," he said yesterday.

Nathias Beaumann, the German event rider, has sent a fax and has also submitted two photographs to the international federation, the FEI, in order to substantiate his allegations that the Argentinian show jumping team have used illegal training methods at their pre-Olympic site at Pine Top Farm.

The FEI appeal committee is taking this seriously. It has called an urgent meeting to discuss the matter.

that has affected their judgement."

Britain's goalkeeper, Hilary Rose, of Sutton Coldfield, is expected to have returned to full fitness after injuring a rib in Tuesday's convincing 5-0 win against Argentina, and the stunning return to form of striker Jane Sissons, who scored a hat-trick in the game, has given the squad added confidence.

"We've had some ups and downs and it feels like we've been here an eternity," said the captain, Jill Atkins, one of eight players who were bronze medalists at the Barcelona Games. "We've had a good

rest and will be back fighting for the bronze."

Slocombe, a university lecturer from Bristol, added that she had not yet made a decision about her future. "I've been involved in the game as an international player and coach for 26 years, and reaching the medal stages here has been the highlight of my career," she said.

"I shall consider the future when I return from holiday. There have been many, many lows and too few highs. But whatever the outcome of tomorrow's match, I shall cherish the memories."

SCARLET FACES IN ATLANTA

Yesterday's Olympic bloomers

The latest twist in the continuing saga of the Olympic buses is that the drivers have now gone on strike. They say that replacement buses which have been conscripted from a fleet of school vehicles are just too dangerous to drive.

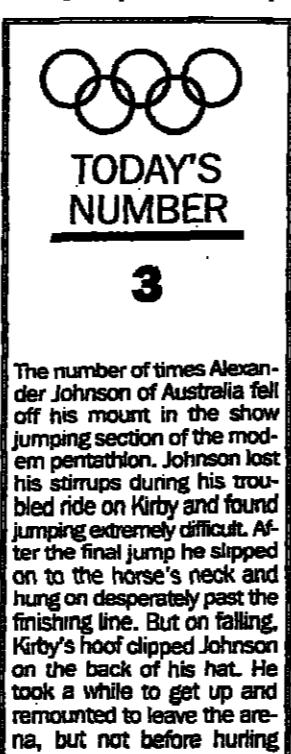
Tires are split, fire extinguishers are out of date, steering wheels fall off and doors don't close, which is a bit worrying considering the buses take thousands of children to and from school every day during term time.

The drivers rebelled after being told to drive the buses – which have no radios or air conditioners – to the Georgia International Horse Park in Conyers, which is one of the longest routes in the system. "It would be no different for

us to take one of these buses and kill some people than to put that bomb in Olympic Park," said Katie Brady, a California school bus driver hired to work during the Olympics.

It now seems only a matter of time before the authorities are forced to dust down a stagecoach or two to transport people about, as the current fleet of buses are piling up on the hard shoulders of the free ways.

The most common sight around Atlanta now is no longer an Olympic flag, but a bus driver standing by his vehicle with his bonnet up at the side of the road as he looks around in bemusement and scratches his head, knowing neither where he is or what is wrong with his bus.



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